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As the Tamil Nadu Government is implementing remarkably well various welfare schemes for the benefit of people living in the State irrespective of their language, Tamil Nadu has the distinction of being a State where people speaking various languages live in fraternal amity.

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-Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

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First Wrapper

Hon'ble Minister for Fisheries, Finance, Personnel and Administrative Reforms, Thiru. D. Jayakumar presented the Tamil Nadu Budget for 2017-2018 in the Legislative Assembly on 16.03.2017.

Maximum allocation for school education

Tax-free budget does not slacken pitch on welfare measures, subsidies

Speech of **Thiru. D. Jayakumar**, Hon'ble Minister for Fisheries, Finance and Personnel and Administrative Reforms, Government of Tamil Nadu, presenting the Budget for the year 2017-2018 to the Legislative Assembly on 16.03.2017

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

ஒன்றா உலகத்து உயர்ந்த புகழல்லால்
பொன்றாது நிற்பதொன் றில்

(குறள் 233)

Save praise alone that soars on high,
Nought lives on earth that shall not die

(Kural 233)

There is nothing that stands forth in the world imperishable, except fame, exalted in solitary greatness. This eternal wisdom of the Divine Poet Thiruvalluvar was aptly fulfilled through the life of our revered leader the late Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi J Jayalalithaa. Today, her fame has reached worldwide through her commitment to the well being of the people whom she loved and for the progress of the State she made into a model welfare State in the Country. We are proud, honoured and privileged to have lived during the times of our beloved

leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, to have served the people under her sagacious leadership and to have got the opportunity by her grace to take her mission forward. With her image in our hearts, in this august House, where she shone in all her glory, we re-dedicate our lives to realise her dream of making Tamil Nadu, the numero uno State in the Country. With this resolve in mind, come what may, this Government is committed to fulfilling the aspirations of the people of Tamil Nadu, who have reposed their faith in our late leader and have given their mandate for continuity and stability. With the blessings of our beloved leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, I rise to present the Budget Estimates for 2017-2018.

2. A responsive Government must formulate and implement schemes aimed at enhancing the well being of the people, alleviating their hardships and protecting the vulnerable among them. At the same time, it must also create an environment needed to enable high levels of economic growth that is inclusive and equitable. Thus, this Government has spelt out **peace, progress and prosperity** as its development goal. Following this cardinal principle, since assuming charge, this Government has been formulating and implementing several socio-economic development programmes and infrastructure projects. The five priority missions formulated by the Government headed by our beloved leader Amma in its last budget speech, namely, **water resource management, poverty reduction, housing for the poor, skill building and clean Tamil Nadu campaign** along with eleven focus areas of development will continue to form the bedrock of this Government's strategy for development. Keeping these priorities in mind, this Budget has been formulated for the overall development of the State and the welfare of the people.

3. On the very day of assuming office, our beloved leader late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa had fulfilled five important electoral promises. Altogether, 164 electoral promises have been implemented already and action is underway on 55 promises. Immediately upon assuming charge, the Hon'ble Chief Minister has also issued Government orders to fulfill five more electoral promises, namely,

- **Enhancing the maternity assistance for pregnant women from Rs.12,000/- to Rs.18,000/-**
- **Closing 500 more TASMAC retail outlets**
- **Distributing one lakh two wheelers to working women at 50 per cent subsidy, not exceeding Rs.20,000/-**
- **Doubling the financial assistance to the unemployed youth**
- **Constructing 5,000 houses for fishermen**

Let me assure this august House that this Government is committed to fulfilling the remaining electoral promises.

4. The Economic Survey 2016-2017 has revised the Gross Domestic Product growth rate of India for the year 2016-2017 to 7.1 per cent and has projected the growth rate for 2017-2018 between 6.5 per cent to 7.5 per cent. It is essential that our economy be rejuvenated to achieve a higher economic growth that would enable the Government to mobilize

more resources to meet its commitment to redistributive justice and accelerated economic development. **The pace of economic activity is picking up and it is expected that Gross State Domestic Product will grow at 7.94 per cent at constant prices during 2016-2017. We expect that the concerted efforts of this Government will further create a favourable environment for increased private and public investment in key sectors, thus boosting the economic growth to 9 per cent during the year 2017-2018.**

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

5. The GST Council has reached a consensus on several significant issues such as fixing the threshold limit for registration; full compensation for five years to States for losses on account of GST implementation; adopting a growth rate of 14 per cent per year over the base year 2015-2016 for the purpose of calculating the revenue of the States for determining compensation; finalization of the draft legislation for Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST), Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) and compensation; and cross-empowerment of Central and State Government officials to administer all GST statutes. The Government is committed to enacting State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) Act as and when the CGST and IGST laws are enacted by the Parliament.

Planning and Development

6.The Government of India has done away with the distinction between Plan and Non-Plan allocations in Budget formulation from 2017-2018. We welcome this move, which has been the long standing demand of the late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa, as it would simplify the budgetary process and keep the focus firmly on the functional classification of expenditure. **In consonance with the above approach, this Government will replace the State Planning Commission with the State Development Policy Council to advise the Government on policy coherence and formulation of programmes to guide the development of the State.**

7. Under the visionary leadership of the late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa, the 'Vision Tamil Nadu 2023' document was formulated and released, which aims at promoting equitable and sustainable socio-economic development of the State. For raising additional resources to realize this vision, the Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Fund (TNIF) has been promoted as an Alternative Investment Fund Category-I (AIF-I) through the Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Fund Management Corporation (TNIFMC). TNIF has been registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and is now in the process of mobilizing Rs.6,000 crore with a first financial close of Rs.1,200 crore, which will be used to fund new infrastructure projects

in Tamil Nadu. **The State Government has already released Rs.30 crore, as part amount of its commitment of Rs.300 crore i.e., 5 per cent of the total fund as First Loss Catalytic Capital (FLCC). An amount of Rs.2,000 crore has been allocated in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for the Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Development Fund (TNIDF) which includes an allocation of Rs.270 crore towards the balance of First Loss Catalytic Capital. An amount of Rs.200 crore has also been allocated for the Project Preparation Fund of the Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Development Board (TNIDB).**

8. Under the State Balanced Growth Fund (SBGF) which was constituted to address regional imbalances and to bring about a balanced socio-economic development across the State, 472 projects have been approved at a cost of Rs.282.22 crore in 105 backward blocks in rural areas since its inception. The Special Area Development Programme (SADP) is being implemented with State's own funds to address the needs of hilly areas. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.100 crore and Rs.75 crore have been allocated for the SBGF and SADP respectively. Under the Tamil Nadu Innovation Initiatives (TANII) launched in 2015-2016 to promote innovation in Government and Government agencies, 70 innovative projects have been taken up at a total cost of Rs.138.39 crore during 2016-2017. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.150 crore has been allocated for this purpose.

Calamity Relief

9. A sum of Rs.585 crore was sanctioned from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) to undertake relief and restoration works after 'Vardah' cyclone which had caused extensive damage in Chennai, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur Districts. An unprecedented drought that followed the Vardah cyclone all over the State is causing unbearable hardship to the people resulting in widespread crop failure and drinking water shortage. A sum of Rs.615 crore has been sanctioned to tackle the drinking water crisis which includes Rs.105 crore from the SDRF. An amount of Rs.6.91 crore has been allocated to ensure adequate availability of fodder and cattle feed. After enumeration, 32.30 lakh farmers have been identified as having suffered crop loss over an extent of 50.35 lakh acres. Input subsidy relief totaling Rs.2,247 crore has been sanctioned and is being released directly to the farmers' bank accounts. **The Government has also submitted a Memorandum to the Central Government seeking Rs.22,573 crore from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) for restoration works for damages caused by Vardah cyclone and Rs.39,565 crore for drought relief measures.** The Central teams have also visited the State to make their assessment and this Government is hopeful that the Government of India will soon release the required assistance from NDRF.

Poverty Reduction

10. The Government has launched the Mission for Poverty Reduction under the aegis of the Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women (TNCDW). With a long term objective of eradicating poverty

from rural and urban areas, the Mission aims to promote socio-economic development of the poor, focusing on education, health and economic security. The Mission promotes micro-enterprises through women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) with appropriate skill training and credit and market linkages. Through this, the micro enterprises are being networked to reap the benefits of economy of scale.

11. The Government has been implementing the 'Pudhu Vaazhvu Project' in 120 blocks covering 9.80 lakh poor households in 4,174 Village Panchayats. This project is coming to a close in June 2017. In the next phase, the World Bank assisted Tamil Nadu Rural Transformation Project (TNRTP) will be launched in 2017-2018 to cover an additional 120 blocks with an outlay of Rs.1,000 crore. With the Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihood Mission (TNSRLM) also being implemented in the remaining 145 blocks, all 385 blocks in the State would come under the coverage of poverty alleviation programmes. This Government is determined to uplift all economically deprived families to make the State free from poverty. An allocation of Rs.469 crore has been made in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for these rural poverty alleviation programmes.

12. The National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM) is being implemented in the urban areas, albeit only with limited allocations from the Government of India. During 2016-2017, an amount of Rs.58.45 crore was released so far to our State under this scheme by the Government of India. In order to tackle urban poverty comprehensively,

the State Government is implementing the TamilNadu Urban Livelihood Mission (TNULM) with the State's own funds to supplement the NULM. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.272.12 crore has been allocated for these urban poverty alleviation programmes.

Employment and Skill Development

13. The Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation (TNSDC) has been set up as a nodal agency to co-ordinate skill development activities in the State. During the past six years, 2.46 lakh youth have been trained and 73,558 youth have been provided with gainful employment. A programme to test and certify one lakh skilled workers who do not possess skill certification is under implementation. **In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, an allocation of Rs.150 crore has been made for the 'Tamil Nadu Skill Development Mission' to train one lakh youth. This Government intends to establish India International Skill Centres at Coimbatore, Madurai and Tiruchirappalli and would seek assistance**

from the Government of India. These centres will offer advanced training and foreign language courses and will assist those seeking job opportunities abroad through the Overseas Manpower Corporation.

14. The monthly unemployment allowance has been doubled by this Government, thereby fulfilling yet another electoral promise. Accordingly, the monthly allowance has been enhanced from Rs.100/- to Rs.200/-, Rs.150/- to Rs.300/-, Rs.200/- to Rs.400/- and Rs.300/- to Rs.600/- for the unemployed youth in the categories of 10th standard failed, 10th standard passed, 12th standard passed and graduate or postgraduate respectively. Special camps will be conducted to impart skill training to the beneficiaries who are getting allowances under this scheme based on their eligibility and aptitude so as to enable them to get suitable employment.

Tamil Development

15. In order to rejuvenate research work in Tamil language, this Government has allocated a sum of Rs.4.36 crore to upgrade the facilities in the International Institute of Tamil Studies which was established by Perarignar Anna. It has also sanctioned Rs.37 crore to construct a Master Plan Complex building for the World Tamil Sangam, Madurai. We now propose to establish a world class 'Tamil Cultural Heritage Museum' at World Tamil Sangam, Madurai to showcase the rich cultural heritage of the Tamil people. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.48 crore has been allocated for Tamil Development including Rs.6 crore for the Tamil University.

Law and Order

16. This Government has been effectively maintaining public order in the State amidst several challenges. It is committed to providing own buildings to all Police Stations. Since 2011, the Government has taken up construction of 141 Police Stations at a cost of Rs.77.42 crore. **The Government will take up construction of buildings for 49 more Police Stations in 2017-2018 at a cost of Rs.30 crore.** It is also committed to providing adequate housing facilities to the Police Personnel. Towards this end, housing projects have been taken up in a phased manner over the last six years. Construction of 14,172 houses was sanctioned at a cost of Rs.1,655 crore since 2011. **In 2017-2018, the Government will take up construction of 3,000 more houses for Police Personnel at a cost of Rs.450 crore through the Tamil Nadu Police Housing Corporation.**

17. To keep the morale of the Police force high, additional staff, vehicles and equipment are being provided. The allowance for the Police Personnel for kit maintenance has been enhanced by Rs.100/- per month, in addition to enhancing hardship allowance and risk allowance. Out of 10,099 persons recruited for youth brigade by the Tamil Nadu Uniformed Services Recruitment Board in 2014, 8,500 persons were absorbed as Grade II Police Constables in Tamil Nadu Special Police Battalions. **The Tamil Nadu Uniformed Services Recruitment Board will recruit another 10,500 persons in 2017-2018 to the Tamil Nadu Special Police Youth Brigade in the existing vacancies.**

18. The State Government has networked all the 1,913 Police Stations / special units and 488 higher offices throughout the State under the 'Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System'. This has facilitated quicker search and identification of criminals thereby improving the effectiveness of the Police in solving criminal cases. Under the 'Modernisation of Police Force', this Government has provided additional vehicles and modern equipment for surveillance and communication to the Police at a cost of Rs.51.33 crore during 2016-2017. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, a sum of Rs.47.91 crore has been allocated for the Modernisation of Police Force. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.6,483 crore has been allocated for the Police Department.

Fire and Rescue Services

19.The Government has been modernizing the Fire and Rescue Services Department continuously by regularly inducting modern equipment. During 2016-2017, the Government has sanctioned 15 water tenders and five small foam tenders. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.253 crore has been allocated for the Fire and Rescue Services Department.

Prisons

20. Prisons are corrective institutions that reform prisoners and facilitate their re-integration into the society by providing skill training and engaging them in production centres set up inside the prisons. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.282 crore has been allocated for the Prisons Department.

Administration of Justice

21.This Government has ordered for the constitution of 265 new Courts since 2011 to improve the infrastructure for judiciary. Further, Rs.928.22 crore was sanctioned for the construction of Court buildings and provision of additional staff. Digitisation of Court records has been taken up at a cost of Rs.37 crore and is expected to substantially improve case file management and enhance the efficiency of the judiciary. A sum of Rs.229 crore has been provided in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for construction of buildings for the judiciary. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.984 crore has been allocated for Judicial administration.

Governance

22.At present, 140 public services are being provided through e-Sevai centres which include patta transfer, printing of EPIC cards, issue of life certificates to pensioners, application for social welfare schemes and payment of utility bills. It is noteworthy to mention that these e-Sevai centres are truly getting transformed into 'one stop solution centres' for all services being provided by the Government. With the notification of 'E-Service Delivery Rules', more than 500 Government services will be made available online. The 'State Resident Data Hub' (SRDH), an integrated database of all residents in Tamil Nadu that enables the Government to ensure better identification of beneficiaries, greater accountability and efficient monitoring of schemes is operational. Under 'AMMA Thittam' launched by this Government, an average of 50,000 petitions are being resolved every month. Further, the Government has

also set up the Amma Call Centre that works round the clock, receiving and resolving public grievances.

Revenue Administration

23. Sixty five new Taluks and nine new Revenue Divisions have been created during 2011-2016 and in 2016-2017, five more new Taluks have been added. This has improved the accessibility and service delivery of the Revenue Department. The infrastructure of the Revenue Department has been substantially strengthened by providing new buildings for Taluks, Revenue Divisions and Collectors' Offices. In 2016-2017, the Government has taken up construction of new buildings for 31 Taluk Offices along with Tahsildar Quarters and five Revenue Divisional Offices at a cost of Rs.108.34 crore. During 2017-2018, construction of buildings for 10 more Taluk Offices with quarters and five Revenue Divisional Offices with Quarters will be taken up at a cost of Rs.42.16 crore.

24. In 2016-2017, this Government has distributed 2.72 lakh free house site pattas so far. For the year 2017-2018, this Government has fixed a target of issuing 3.50 lakh house site pattas to poor families. Under the 'Chief Minister's Uzhavar Padhukappu Thittam', Rs.204.97 crore has been distributed to 3.03 lakh beneficiaries in 2016-2017. **At present, in the event of natural death of a maroon cardholder under this scheme, assistance of Rs.10,000/- is being extended to the family. This amount will be enhanced to Rs.20,000/, bringing it on par with the**

Distress Relief Scheme. For the year 2017-2018, Rs.251 crore has been allocated for this scheme. A sum of Rs.5,695 crore has been allocated for the Revenue Department in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

Agriculture

25. The Government has been taking concerted efforts to increase the production and productivity of agricultural crops and to enhance farmers' income. The State Government launched the Food Grain Mission in 2012-2013 to achieve food security with a special focus on production of paddy, millets and pulses. Besides popularizing the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) technology, direct sowing of paddy is also being encouraged to overcome water shortage. A special package for pulses cultivation, based on cluster approach, was launched during 2016-2017 with an allocation of Rs.50 crore. **This Government has set a target of producing 100 lakh metric tonnes of food grains in 2017-2018.**

26. Considering the fact that sugarcane is a highly water intensive crop and the area under cultivation is coming down, special efforts are being made to increase the area under the Sustainable Sugarcane Initiative (SSI) method of cultivation and drip irrigation to enhance productivity and to compensate production loss due to area reduction. **Thus, this Government has set a target of extending drip irrigation to 35,000 acres under sugarcane and bringing 40,000 acres under SSI method of cultivation.**

27. About 57 per cent of the area under cultivation in the State is rainfed. Considering its vulnerability to weather aberrations, a Mission on Sustainable Dry Land Agriculture has been launched during 2016-2017 that focuses on improving the production and productivity of millets, pulses, oil seeds and cotton. This programme is being implemented at an estimated cost of Rs.802.90 crore over four years following a cluster based approach and seeks to establish 1,000 dry land clusters of 2,500 acre each, with Primary Agricultural Co-operative Credit Societies as nodal points. **In 2016-2017, this scheme is being implemented in 200 dry land clusters covering five lakh acres and another 400 clusters will be taken up in 2017-2018 covering 10 lakh acres of dry land.**

28. A new comprehensive crop insurance scheme, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) is being implemented in this State since Kharif 2016. Under this scheme, 15.20 lakh farmers have been enrolled during 2016-2017 covering an area of 30.33 lakh acres. This Government has sanctioned Rs.487.37 crore towards premium subsidy during 2016-2017. **During 2017-2018, efforts will be taken to bring more cropped area under this insurance scheme for which Rs.522.70 crore has been provided as premium subsidy in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.**

29. The State focuses on diversification of crops and increasing the area under highly remunerative horticultural crops. **It is proposed to increase the area under horticultural crops from the present level of 34 lakh acres to 39 lakh acres in 2017-2018.** An innovative programme of supply chain management for perishable commodities

is under implementation in 10 Districts at an estimated cost of Rs.398 crore to reduce post harvest losses and enhance value addition at the farm level. Under the National Horticultural Mission, several initiatives have been taken up to popularize high-end technology and to strengthen post-harvest infrastructure facilities.

30. This Government will continue to protect farmers from price fluctuations. Towards this, Rs.200 crore has been provided in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 as production incentive paid over and above the Minimum Support Price fixed by Central Government for paddy. Similarly, this Government has provided Rs.137.26 crore to co-operative sugar mills as ways and means advance to settle the cane arrears as per the Fair and Remunerative Price to farmers.

31. The State is already in the process of upgrading agricultural marketing infrastructure and integrating important regulated markets and co-operative markets. The Agricultural Produce Marketing (Regulation) Act, 1987 has been amended in February 2017 to facilitate participation of our markets in the e-National Agricultural Markets (eNAM) Project. These initiatives will be continued so that markets function efficiently and farmers get remunerative prices.

32. Farm machinery and equipment are being distributed to farmers and primary agricultural co-operative credit societies and support is being extended to youth for starting Custom Hiring Centres to overcome shortage of agricultural labour. Subsidy of Rs.299.83 crore has been given for this purpose in the last six years. **During 2017-2018, it is proposed to spend Rs.100 crore towards this, of which Rs.30 crore will be earmarked for subsidy to farmers for procuring farm machinery and equipment. Already 513 Custom Hiring Centres have been established by unemployed youth with a subsidy assistance of Rs.49.59 crore. During 2017-2018, it is proposed to assist the setting up of another 590 Custom Hiring Centres.**

33. In 2017-2018, a new programme will be launched with an outlay of Rs.50 crore for strengthening the seed production infrastructure that would cover the seed production chain from breeder seeds to certified seeds for important crops like paddy, pulses, oil seeds, cotton and vegetables.

34. An area of 4.84 lakh acres has been brought under micro-irrigation at a cost of Rs.1,002 crore benefiting 1.50 lakh farmers in the last six years. During 2017-2018, an additional one lakh acres will be brought under micro irrigation with a special focus on sugarcane and horticultural crops with an allocation of Rs.369 crore.

35.Fragmentation of land holdings is a major challenge to agriculture with 74.47 lakh out of the total 81.18 lakh operational holdings being small and marginal holdings. These small and marginal farms have limited capacity to mobilize credit, adopt latest technologies and to add value to their agricultural produce. **The Government of Tamil Nadu is therefore launching an innovative programme for organizing small and marginal farmers into 'Farmer Producer Groups' which**

will be federated into 'Farmer Producer Organisations' to promote collective farming for credit mobilization, better adoption of technology and to facilitate effective forward and backward linkages. In 2017-2018, as a pilot project, 2,000 such Farmer Producer Groups will be promoted, each comprising not less than 100 farmers so as to cover at least two lakh farmers this year. Each Farmer Producer Group will be given a corpus fund of Rs.5 lakh besides channelising grants and credit available to Farmer Producer Organizations from NABARD and Small Farmer Agri Business Consortium. A total allocation of Rs.100 crore has been made for this purpose for 2017-2018. This scheme will be scaled up in the coming years to benefit 40 lakh farmers over the next five years.

Animal Husbandry

36. Continuing the pioneering initiatives of distributing milch cows and sheep or goats to the poor free of cost, **the Government will provide 12,000 milch cows to poor women and six lakh sheep or goats to 1.50 lakh poor families during the year 2017-2018. A sum of Rs.182 crore has been allocated for this scheme in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.** The Government will continue to implement Poultry Development and Fodder Development schemes, each with a budgetary allocation of Rs.25 crore in 2017-2018. **With the objective of conserving native cattle breeds of Tamil Nadu, this Government will provide additional financial support for implementing 'Breed Conservation Programme' for Kangeyam, Bargur and Umbalacheri breeds and will also take up the conservation of other major local breeds like Pulikulam and Alambadi.**

37. This Government has been giving special attention to the development of veterinary infrastructure by upgrading 910 sub-centres into veterinary dispensaries, setting up 20 new veterinary dispensaries and 200 new sub-centres, since 2011. Availability of veterinary service and infrastructure will be strengthened further. **In 2017-2018, it is proposed to upgrade 25 sub-centres to veterinary dispensaries and five veterinary dispensaries at Taluk headquarters to veterinary hospitals, besides creating 25 new sub-centres.**

38. This Government has continuously supported Aavin for strengthening its dairy processing infrastructure. As a result, the average milk processing capacity of Aavin has increased from 30.72 lakh litres per day in 2011 to 40.22 lakh litres per day in 2016. Aavin will take up product diversification and other value addition activities to enhance price realization for milk producers. **A new Ultra Heat Treatment (UHT) plant for processing and packing flavoured milk and milkshakes will**

be established in Madurai with a capacity of 25,000 litres per day at a cost of Rs.40 crore. As a market promotion measure, 200 new sales outlets will be opened in Colleges and universities to popularize the brand Aavin. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.1,161 crore and Rs.130 crore have been allocated for the Animal Husbandry and Dairy sectors respectively.

Fisheries

39. **This Government has fulfilled yet another electoral promise by sanctioning the construction of 5,000 houses for fishermen during 2017-2018 at a cost of Rs.85 crore.** The Government will continue to provide welfare assistance of Rs.5,000/- per family during lean fishing season and Rs.5,000/- per family during the fishing ban period. **The relief available under both the National Saving-cum-Relief Scheme for marine fishermen and the Tamil Nadu Saving-cum-Relief Scheme for fisherwomen will be enhanced from Rs.2,700/- to Rs.4,500 /-by suitably increasing the State contribution.** In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.357 crore has been allocated for these welfare schemes.

40. **Considering the request of the fisherfolk, the Government will enhance the quantity of sales tax exempted diesel from 15,000 litres to 18,000 litres per mechanised fishing boat per year and from 3,600 litres to 4,000 litres per motorised Country craft per year. The Government will also enhance the quantity of sales tax exempted industrial kerosene supplied at the subsidized rate of Rs.25 per litre from 3,000 litres to 3,400 litres per motorised Country craft per year. These measures will cause an additional expenditure of Rs.28 crore per year.** A special relief of Rs.5 lakh each was sanctioned to 18 fishermen, totaling Rs.90 lakh, whose boats got damaged beyond repair and salvage in Sri Lankan custody.

41. The Government of Tamil Nadu is committed to the development of fisheries infrastructure in the State. Since 2011-2012, an amount of Rs.1,105 crore has been sanctioned for construction of three new fishing harbours namely Colachel and Thengapattinam in Kanniyakumari District and Poompuhar in Nagapattinam District; expansion and modernization of fishing harbours in seven places namely Kasimedu, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, Pazhayar, Thoothukudi, Mallipattinam and Chinnamuttom. Further, 35 Fish Landing Centres have also been constructed across the State. During 2017-2018, infrastructure development works for Rs.171.12 crore, including the construction of a new fishing harbour at Mookaiyur in Ramanathapuram District at a cost of Rs.113.90 crore will be taken up.

42. The coastal villages bear the brunt of sea erosion. **The National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Ministry of Earth Sciences has designed an environmental friendly solution of submerged dykes made up of sand filled geo-synthetic tubes for coastal protection and a pilot project is being undertaken in Kadalur-Periyakuppam Village of Kancheepuram District. This technique will protect the coast from wave**

action and help to increase the fisheries potential. This strategy will be adopted for coastal protection works in critical locations affected by sea erosion at a cost of Rs.20 crore with NABARD funding in 2017-2018. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, a total amount of Rs.768 crore has been allocated to the Fisheries Department.

Co-operation

43.The compassionate leader, the late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa, has waived all outstanding short-term crop loans, medium term (agriculture) loans and long-term farm sector loans extended by co-operative institutions to small and marginal farmers. Accordingly, **Rs.4,893.48 crore of principal and Rs.386.77 crore of outstanding interest as on 31st March 2016, both totaling Rs.5,280.25 crore, was waived. With the interest amount of Rs.760.49 crore due for phased reimbursement over five years, the State has taken over a financial burden of Rs.6,040.74 crore in total, which has benefited 12.02 lakh small and marginal farmers.** A sum of Rs.1,794.66 crore has been repaid during 2016-2017 and an amount of Rs.1,830.50 crore has been provided for this purpose in the Budget Estimates for 2017-2018. During the financial year 2017-2018, co-operatives will extend total fresh crop loans of Rs.7,000 crore.

Public Distribution System

44. The State Government has adopted the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) from 1st November, 2016. I am proud to mention that the Government has retained the universal character of the Public Distribution System in

the State. Supply of toor dal / lentil and edible oil will continue under the special PDS at the subsidised rate. An allocation of Rs.5,500 crore has been made in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for food subsidy.

45. A Price Stabilisation Fund with a corpus of Rs.100 crore has been constituted for market intervention measures to stabilize prices of essential commodities. Innovative initiatives like Farm Fresh Outlets, Amma Unavagam, Amma Marundagam and Amma Salt will continue.

Environment and Forests

46. In the aftermath of Cyclone 'Vardah', the Government has launched a special 'Post-Vardah Greening Project' for restoring the greenery at a cost of Rs.13 crore in Chennai, Tiruvallur and Kancheepuram Districts on 24th February 2017, the Birth Anniversary of the late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa. This project aims at planting native trees along roads and in public spaces in co-ordination with community based organisations and also promotes planting of trees in private lands and homesteads.

47. Under the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) assisted 'Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Conservation and Greening Project', the Government is undertaking bio-diversity conservation activities at a project cost of Rs.686 crore for forest protection and socio-economic development of tribal and other communities living in forest fringe villages. An expenditure of Rs.398 crore has been incurred so far on the project and Rs.88 crore has been allocated for this project in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

48.The State Government will take up a wide range of projects under the Government of India's 'National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change' and 'Green Climate Fund'. To start with, Government of India has sanctioned Rs.24.74 crore for the management of coastal habitats and bio-diversity in the Gulf of Mannar. **Projects for the protection and restoration of Appa and Koswari islands of the Gulf of Mannar; restoration of wetland eco-systems like Pallikaranai marshlands; and anti-sea erosion works are also being lined up for funding from the Green Climate Fund.**

49.In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.567 crore has been provided for the Environment and Forests Department.

Water Resources and Irrigation

50. The Government has been making concerted efforts towards conservation and optimum utilisation of water resources. The 'Mission for Water Resource Management' with initial outlay of Rs.100 crore to restore water bodies and revive the practice of Kudimaramath by user communities has already been launched. **The Government will undertake Kudimaramath with an increased allocation of Rs.300 crore during 2017-2018. Activities like removal of weeds and scrub jungles, maintenance of bunds, repair of sluices and other structures in tanks and channels are proposed to be taken up under this programme with community participation.**

51. The Government is implementing the first phase of the Asian Development Bank assisted 'Climate Change Adaptation Programme' at an estimated cost of Rs.960.66 crore in the Vennar sub-basin of the Cauvery delta from 2015-2016. Works have been taken up in six river drainage systems, namely, Harichandranadhi, Adappar, Pandavaiyar, Vellaiyar, Valavanar and Uppanar. During 2016-2017, an expenditure of Rs.71 crore has been incurred so far and Rs.400 crore has been allocated in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for this project.

52. The successful implementation of the 'Irrigated Agriculture Modernisation and Water-bodies Restoration and Management project' (IAMWARM) has enabled us **to take up a second phase during 2017-2018 with loan assistance from the World Bank at an estimated cost of Rs.3,042 crore. This phase will cover 66 other**

sub-basins in 29 Districts, rehabilitating 4,778 tanks and 477 anaicuts and benefiting 5.43 lakh hectares of ayacut lands. For the IAMWARM Phase-II project, Rs.814 crore has been allocated in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

53. The World Bank funded 'Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project' is being implemented in 107 dams in the State at an estimated cost of Rs.745.49 crore from the year 2012-2013. Works in 22 dams have been completed while works in other dams are in progress. The total expenditure incurred so far is Rs.195.30 crore. In this Budget Estimates, Rs.354 crore has been provided for this project.

54. A project linking Thamiraparani and Nambiyar rivers is being implemented in four stages and Rs.213 crore has been incurred in executing the first two stages. Land acquisition is in progress for implementing Phase III and IV and Rs.300 crore has been provided in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for this project. **The Government has proposed to take up the Athikadavu-Avinashi irrigation, groundwater recharge and drinking water supply project under the 'Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme' component of the Government of India's 'Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana'. Anticipating Government of India's approval, an amount of Rs.250 crore has been provided in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for the Athikadavu-Avinashi project.**

55. This Government has taken up construction and rehabilitation of irrigation tanks, anaicuts, canals and channels under NABARD's Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF). Since 2011, the Government has taken up 177 works with an outlay of Rs.935.21 crore, out of which 102 works have been completed at a cost of Rs.453.36 crore. A project for diverting flood waters from Chittar to fill irrigation tanks in Tirunelveli District at a cost of Rs.25 crore is in progress. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, a sum of Rs.279 crore has been allocated for NABARD assisted irrigation schemes. An allocation of Rs.4,791 crore has been provided for the Water Resources Department in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

Highways

56. An announcement was made during 2011-2012 that all State Highways would be widened to a minimum width of two lane and all Major District Roads (MDRs) would be widened to a minimum width of intermediate lane. During the last six years, 864 km of State Highways has been widened to double lane at a cost of Rs.507 crore and 3,019 km of Major District Roads has been widened to intermediate lane or double lane at a cost of Rs.1,555 crore. The remaining 115 km of State Highways and 107 km of Major District Roads will be widened during 2017-2018 at a cost of Rs.160 crore.

57. During 2017-2018, widening of 1,000 km of roads, improvement of 3,000 km of roads and also 200 bridges / culverts will be taken up under the **'Comprehensive Road Infrastructure Development Programme' (CRIDP). A sum of Rs.3,100 crore has been allocated in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for this scheme.** Strengthening and maintenance works

on State Highways and Major District Roads have been taken up under the 'Performance Based Maintenance Contract' (PBMC) system in Pollachi, Krishnagiri, Ramanathapuram and Tiruvallur divisions at an overall project cost of Rs.1,774.31 crore. **The PBMC system will be extended to Virudhunagar division in the year 2017-2018.**

58. This Government is placing utmost emphasis on road safety. A comprehensive project for rectifying black spots costing Rs.1,130 crore was formulated, out of which 3,382 works for Rs.959.94 crore have been taken up for implementation so far. Further, **Road Safety works at a cost of Rs.200 crore under CRIDP scheme and Rs.100 crore under Special Road Safety Project fund will be taken up during the financial year 2017-2018.**

59. The Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project-II has been taken up at an outlay of Rs.5,171 crore with World Bank loan assistance. Works for upgradation of 427 km of roads and maintenance of 597 km of roads are in progress. Four laning of 146 km of roads with an outlay of Rs.1,400 crore under Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode will commence during 2017-2018. An amount of Rs.1,508 crore has been provided for this project in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

60. Considering the rapid urbanisation and industrial development **in and around Chennai city, 9 important roads inter-connecting major highways of a total length of 141.60 km have been identified for four laning / six laning and improvements at a cost of Rs.744 crore. Out of these, works for Rs.232.20 crore will be taken up in the first phase during 2017-2018.** The

Chennai Peripheral Ring Road at a cost of Rs.13,000 crore is under the consideration of JICA. **The land acquisition for Section-I of the proposed Chennai Peripheral Ring Road, i.e. Northern Port Access Road from Ennore Port to Thatchur on NH5 has commenced and Rs.951 crore has been sanctioned for this project.**

61.During 2017-2018, this Government will undertake construction of bridges at a cost of Rs.200 crore with NABARD assistance. An amount of Rs.10,067 crore has been provided in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for the Highways Department.

Energy

62. It was under the visionary leadership of the late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa that a power deficit Tamil Nadu has transformed into a power sufficient State. The annual per capita power consumption in Tamil Nadu was 1,040 units in 2011. This has increased to 1,280 units in 2015-2016, whereas the National average is 1,075 units only. The State has been successfully catering to this growing demand. It is a stellar achievement that 9,878 MW has been added to the State's power generation capacity through State and Central Government agencies since 2011. The Government is also expediting the establishment of thermal power plants including the 660 MW expansion unit at Ennore, two units of 660 MW each in Ennore SEZ, 800 MW North Chennai Thermal Power Project Stage-III and two units of 800 MW each in super critical Uppur Thermal Power Project, five super critical units of 800 MW each at Kadaladi and six units of 660 MW each, in Stage I, II, III at Udangudi.

63. The total installed capacity of renewable energy in the State including solar, wind etc., is 10,206 MW, the highest in the Country. During 2016-2017, the State realised 13,431.78 million units under wind energy and 1,721.37 million units of power from solar power generators so far. The State is taking pro-active steps and has been requesting the Government of India to develop a dedicated inter-State Green Energy Corridor to transmit surplus wind energy to energy deficit States.

64. The Government is implementing the Green Energy Corridor Project with the assistance of KfW at an estimated cost of Rs.1,593 crore for improving the transmission infrastructure in the State. Further, with the assistance of Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), the Tamil Nadu Transmission System Improvement Project is being implemented with an outlay of Rs.5,014 crore. An amount of Rs.974 crore has been provided

for these projects in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

65.The State has joined Government of India's Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY). Out of Rs.30,420 crore of debt of the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (TANGEDCO), the State Government has taken over 75 per cent of this debt i.e., Rs.22,815 crore and bonds are being floated in the open market to repay this debt. The remaining 25 per cent of the loans considered under the scheme, i.e., Rs.7,605 crore will be converted into power bonds by TANGEDCO. Due to this debt takeover, TANGEDCO will get interest savings of Rs.2,882 crore per annum and savings of Rs.2,282 crore in principal repayment per annum as these liabilities shift to the State Government. Further, Rs.201 crore per annum will be saved by TANGEDCO due to the reduction in interest rates by converting 25 per cent of the loans into TANGEDCO bonds. **The implementation of UDAY scheme is resulting in an interest saving of Rs.1,335 crore per annum for the State and TANGEDCO together.**

66. Apart from this, a total amount of Rs.4,523 crore, comprising loans, ways and means advances, interest and penal interest has also been converted into share capital assistance in the financial year 2016-2017. This is expected to further improve the financial status of TANGEDCO. As many of the Hydel Power Plants of TANGEDCO have outlived their design life, this Government will undertake modernization of these plants, by raising resources through Revenue Bonds, an innovative financing instrument, which will be subscribed by the Tamil Nadu Investment Fund, managed by TNIFMC. An amount of Rs.16,998 crore has been provided for the energy sector including Rs.8,538 crore as power subsidy for agriculture and other purposes in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

Transport

67. During 2016-2017, this Government has sanctioned Rs.275 crore for the purchase of 2,000 new buses and 100 small buses. An amount of Rs.800 crore has been provided as diesel subsidy, Rs.564 crore as subsidy for free bus passes to students and senior citizens and Rs.150 crore as share capital support in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018. A total amount of Rs.2,192 crore has been allocated for the Transport Department in this Budget.

Chennai Metro Rail Project

68. Of the 45 km stretch of Phase-I of the Chennai Metro Rail project, passenger services have commenced on the 21 km elevated stretch from Koyambedu to St.Thomas Mount and from Little Mount to Airport. Substantial progress has been made on the underground sections and passenger services will commence shortly in the first underground stretch from Koyambedu to Nehru Park. The nine km extension of the Corridor-I from Washermenpet to Thiruvotriyur/ Wimco Nagar is under implementation at a cost of Rs.3,770 crore. **I am happy to inform that three Metro Rail corridors under Phase-II covering a total distance of 107.5 km have been included in the JICA Rolling Plan for which the Detailed Project Report has been prepared.**

Tourism

69. The initiatives taken by the Government have enabled the State to attract the highest number of domestic and international tourists in the Country for the last three years. The first phase of the Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Development Investment Programme for Tourism Project at an outlay of Rs.135 crore with Asian Development Bank (ADB) assistance will be completed soon. The Government will commence the second phase of this project at an outlay of Rs.403 crore in 2017-2018.

70. Under the 'Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spirituality Augmentation Drive' (PRASAD) scheme, tourism development works have been taken up in Kancheepuram and Velankanni at a cost of Rs.22 crore. Further, **coastal tourism circuits in Chennai, Mamallapuram, Rameswaram, Manapadu and Kanniyakumari will be developed under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme at a cost of Rs.100 crore in 2017-2018. Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation will soon launch a project for promoting culture and heritage tourism as a joint venture with Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Fund Management Corporation. Under this project, amenities and tourist facilities will be upgraded in collaboration with Local Bodies and Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department to attract more domestic and international tourists.**

Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments

71. The Annadhanam scheme started by the late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa being implemented in 751 temples in the State will be continued. In 2016-2017, renovation has been carried out in 901 temples at a cost of Rs.54.46 crore and Kumbabhishekam has been performed. **In 2017-2018, the Government will provide financial assistance of Rs. 1 lakh per temple and the number of village temples will be doubled from 500 to 1,000 village temples for taking up renovation works.** As a measure to protect temple lands and prevent their misuse, the Government has been restoring patta in the name of the temples wherever the land has been erroneously registered to private individuals. So far, 5,473.64 acres of lands belonging to 889 temples have been protected from such misuse.

Information Technology

72. Tamil Nadu has emerged as an attractive destination for Information Technology (IT)/ Information Technology enabled Services (ITeS) companies and the Government is taking many pro-active measures to promote investment in software and hardware sectors. The software export from Tamil Nadu is growing steadily and is expected to touch Rs.1,00,300 crore by the end of 2016-2017. The Government has promoted IT parks in the Tier-II cities and in the current year, an additional IT park at Sholinganallur and a Start-up warehouse in Coimbatore, in addition to the one already functioning in Chennai are being set up. The State is taking initiative to promote electronic hardware industry hub at Sriperumbudur, with the support of Government of India. With the efforts taken by the Government, I am sure that Tamil Nadu will continue to retain its prime position in IT/

ITeS. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, an amount of Rs.116 crore has been provided for Information Technology Department.

Industrial Development

73. The Government has taken several initiatives in order to generate new employment opportunities by improving the ease of doing business to attract more investment and to make our State numero uno in the Country. **According to the findings of the National Council of Applied Economic Research's (NCAER) State Investment Potential Index (N-SIPI) survey in March, 2016, Tamil Nadu stands 3rd in the Country in medium investment decisions.**

74. **The single window system in the Tamil Nadu Industries Guidance and Export Promotion Bureau will be strengthened further by making it online so that investors can get all approvals expeditiously in a hassle free manner at one place.** In addition, to ensure timely clearances, a committee has been formed under the chairpersonship of the Chief Secretary to monitor the progress of clearances. A special package of assistance has also been unveiled to attract investments to the Southern Districts of the State. The efforts taken by the Government to implement the Madurai-Thoothukudi industrial corridor are expected to change the pace of industrial development in the Southern Districts of Tamil Nadu. The Government has also created an exclusive land bank of 3,957 acres for industries. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, a sum of Rs.1,950 crore has been provided as investment promotion subsidy and soft loan.

75. To provide a further impetus to industrial development in the State, **the Government will undertake the second phase of the Tamil Nadu Investment Promotion Programme (TNIPP) with JICA assistance at an estimated project cost of Rs.1,295 crore from 2017-2018. Besides improving the policy environment to make the State investor-friendly, this scheme will further strengthen infrastructure for industrial development.**

76. The first ever Global Investors Meet in Tamil Nadu was conducted in a grand manner on the 9th and 10th of September 2015 in Chennai to showcase the potential of the State and retain its position as the most preferred investment destination in the Country. The event attracted an investment of Rs.2.42 lakh crore capable of generating an employment for 4.70 lakh persons through 98 Memoranda of Understanding (MoU). **As already planned, the next Global Investors Meet will be held during 2017-2018 to attract further industrial investment and Rs.75 crore has been provided for this purpose in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.**

77. **An Aerospace Park is being established on 268 acres of land in Vallam-Vadagal SIPCOT Industrial Estate, Kancheepuram at an estimated project cost of Rs.350 crore for advanced computing and design engineering centre for manufacturing aerospace components and providing maintenance and repair services. Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO), in association with SIPCOT, is establishing a Plastic Industries Park in Ponneri Taluk of**

Thiruvallur District with an investment of Rs.264 crore. I am happy to inform that the Government of India has approved the Medi Park Project, which is to be established on 330 acres of land in Kancheepuram District at an estimated project cost of Rs.130 crore. Tamil Nadu Newsprints and Papers Limited, a leading State Public Sector Undertaking, will expand the capacity of its second unit with a total investment of Rs.2,100 crore. In theBudget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.2,088 crore has been provided for the Industries Department.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

78. The State has over 14.89 lakh registered Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) units, the highest in the Country, providing employment to 94.83 lakh persons. The New Entrepreneur-cum-Enterprise Development Scheme (NEEDS), a novel initiative of the late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa has helped first generation entrepreneurs to start new enterprises in the State. Further, **to give a big thrust to start-ups and first generation entrepreneurs and to promote innovation in manufacturing, a strategic plan for entrepreneurship and innovation for the period 2017-2021 will be implemented by Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI). This programme will focus on building MSME entrepreneur competencies through high end market training, mentoring, networking and information services across the enterprise life cycle. This will be funded from a sum of Rs.100 crore that is being allocated in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for NEEDS.**

79. **A special project to develop product specific integrated MSME clusters in four locations namely, a textile cluster each in Kancheepuram and Karur District, a food products cluster in Dharmapuri and a seafood cluster in Ramanathapuram will be taken up under the second phase of JICA assisted Tamil Nadu Investment Promotion Programme at a total estimated cost of Rs.100 crore. Development of three coir products clusters, one each at Negamam, Boodalur and Erode at a total estimated cost of Rs.22 crore will be taken up for promoting value added coir products like construction material, eco-friendly geo-textiles, coir ply, coir pith blocks, etc.** Under the scheme to support private industrial estates, four projects have been sanctioned so far with a grant of Rs.30.45 crore. Five more projects with a grant component of Rs.42.56 crore are under consideration. The initiatives of the Government to develop new clusters, industrial estates and support to private industrial estates will continue.

80. This Government considers promotion of MSME sector a priority because they are critical for sustainable industrial development and they generate large scale employment opportunities. Hence, **the Government will take up the following special measures to boost the MSME sector:**

- **The allocation of capital subsidy to MSME units will be doubled to Rs.160 crore in 2017-2018 from the present level of Rs.80 crore.**

- **The Government will provide 50 per cent grant, subject to an overall ceiling of Rs.5 crore to MSME associations for setting up Trade Facilitation Centres at Madurai, Salem and Tiruchirappalli. An allocation of Rs.15 crore has been made for this purpose in 2017-2018.**
- **An International Exhibition with Buyer Seller Trade Meet will be conducted annually in the State for promoting marketing opportunities for MSME units. A sum of Rs.10 crore has been set apart for this purpose for the year 2017-2018. A special export promotion and marketing support scheme will be launched at an outlay of Rs.10 crore to enhance the competitiveness of MSME units in Domestic and International markets.**
- **A special scheme will be launched to promote energy efficiency in MSME units with an allocation of Rs.5 crore. Under this scheme, suitable incentives will be given to MSME units based on energy audit.**
- **Three quality control and testing labs will be set up in SIDCO estates to improve the quality and competitiveness of MSMEs.**
- **A detailed study will be undertaken by the Government to assess the causes for the closure of MSME units sector-wise and to examine the possibility of supporting the revival of MSME sector in the State.**

81. I hope the above measures will encourage the MSME Sector to improve their performance. An amount of Rs.532 crore has been allocated for MSME sector in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 which is 53 per cent higher than the allocation made during 2016-2017.

Handlooms, Handicrafts, Textiles and Khadi

82. The Government has been implementing the Free Distribution of Sarees and Dhoties Scheme and Rebate Subsidy Scheme to support handloom weavers. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.490 crore has been provided for the 'Free Distribution of Sarees and Dhoties' scheme. Considering the importance of promoting Khadi produced by **Sarvodaya Sangams, the Market Development Assistance (MDA) will be increased from the present allocation of Rs.15 crore to Rs.30 crore for the year 2017-2018. Similarly, the MDA allocation for handlooms will be stepped up to Rs.100 crore and for Khadi and Village Industries Board it will be doubled to Rs.4 crore for the year 2017-2018.**

83. In continuation of the establishment of Urban Haats in Kanniyakumari and Mahabalipuram to promote marketing of handicrafts, **a third Urban Haat will be set up in Udhagamandalam during 2017-2018 at a cost of Rs.5 crore. Further, for revival of languishing crafts, five clusters will be developed at a cost of Rs.2.50 crore.** In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.1,235 crore has been provided for Handlooms and Textiles sectors and Rs.194 crore has been provided for Handicrafts and Khadi sectors.

Rural Development

84. Tamil Nadu has been implementing the 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment

Guarantee Scheme' (MGNREGS) effectively and the State has been appreciated for its performance by the Government of India. Innovative works like forming farm ponds, constructing toilets, planting trees, constructing cattle and poultry sheds, taken up by Tamil Nadu are being emulated now at the National level. Considering the prevailing drought, the number of eligible days for employment has been enhanced from 100 days to 150 days. Since November 2016, the Government of India is releasing the entire labour component directly to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries, while for the material component, 75 per cent being the Central share is routed through the State Budget. This has resulted in a huge reduction in the provision under the MGNREGS in the State Budget. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.1,000 crore has been provided for the MGNREGS.

85. The Government will take up improvement and upgradation of 792 roads and 12 bridges under the Phase-XI of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). **In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.758 crore has been provided under PMGSY and Rs.800 crore will be pooled from various ongoing schemes under Tamil Nadu Rural Roads Improvement Scheme for road works.**

86. Under the 'Member of Legislative Assembly Constituency Development Scheme' (MLACDS), a sum of Rs.470 crore has been provided in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018. A sum of Rs.16,665 crore has been allocated for the Rural Development Department in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

Municipal Administration

87. Tamil Nadu is the most urbanised State in the Country with 48.40 per cent of the total population living in urban areas. I am very glad to inform the august House that Municipal Corporations of Madurai, Salem, Thanjavur and Vellore have been included under the 'Smart Cities Mission' in 2016-2017. Chennai and Coimbatore Municipal Corporations had already been included in 2015-2016, and Special Purpose Vehicles have been formed and identification of projects is underway in these two cities. In the Revised Estimates 2016-2017, an allocation of Rs.772 crore has been provided under the Smart Cities Mission. Under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), works for Rs.3,316.22 crore have been taken up during 2015-2016 and for Rs.3,834.49 crore during 2016-2017 in 27 Cities. **In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.1,200 crore and Rs.1,400 crore have been allocated for the Smart Cities Mission and AMRUT scheme respectively.** Amounts of Rs.386 crore and Rs.400 crore have been provided separately to complete the spill over works under Integrated Urban Development Mission (IUDM) and Chennai Mega City Development Mission (CMCDM) respectively in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

88. In order to boost urban infrastructure development, the State Government has been implementing the 'Tamil Nadu Sustainable Urban Development Programme' (TNSUDP) since June 2015 with financial assistance from the World Bank at an estimated cost of

Rs.2,451.84 crore. Under this programme, 13 projects have been taken up in seven urban local bodies at a cost of Rs.2,223.88 crore, and Rs.430.63 crore has been spent so far. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.563 crore has been allocated for TNSUDP.

89. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.13,996 crore has been allocated for Municipal Administration Department.

Water Supply

90. As the State is reeling under severe drought, this Government faces a formidable challenge in meeting the drinking water needs. Due to 62 per cent deficit in the rainfall collectively from the South-West and North-East Monsoons, the groundwater table has gone down and storage in most of the reservoirs supplying water to Chennai is only 10 to 20 per cent of their capacity. To tide over this drought situation, the Government is taking up works like erection of new deep borewells, rejuvenation of existing borewells and open wells, replacement of pump-sets and supply of water through lorries in needy areas at a cost of Rs.460 crore in rural areas and Rs.150 crore in urban areas.

91. Though the Government of India has substantially reduced its allocations under the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP), the State Government will continue to take up water supply works with NABARD assistance and State funds. During 2016-2017, works have been taken up for Rs.319 crore under NRDWP, for Rs.186 crore under Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) and for Rs.500 crore with NABARD funding. A sum of Rs.300 crore has been provided under NRDWP, Rs.186 crore under MNP and Rs.600 crore under NABARD funded schemes in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

92.Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage (TWAD) Board is implementing 55 water supply schemes covering two Corporations, 17 Municipalities, 49 Town Panchayats and 14,218 rural habitations, benefiting a population of 101.67 lakh at an estimated cost of Rs.4,465.81 crore. Water supply projects are under implementation in 27 added areas in Chennai city at a cost of Rs.599.66 crore. Under the AMRUT scheme, seven water supply schemes covering five Corporations and two Municipalities have been taken up at an estimated cost of Rs.1,823.60 crore which will benefit a population of 23.17 lakh.

Mission for Clean Tamil Nadu

93. The Government has launched the 'Mission for Clean Tamil Nadu' with an aim to create awareness among the public for using toilets and to establish solid waste management systems. This Government is determined to achieve the goal of 100 per cent sanitation coverage in all the villages.

During 2016-2017, this Government has taken up the construction of 15.17 lakh household toilets and 50 community sanitary complexes at a cost of Rs.1,821.40 crore in rural areas. **Under the 'Swachh Bharat Mission' (Gramin), 24.28 lakh household toilets and 50 community sanitary complexes will be taken up for construction in 2017-2018.** The Government will continue to engage 65,874 workers under MGNREGS as 'Thooimai

Kaavalars' for collection, segregation and disposal of solid waste, thus covering all the 12,524 Village Panchayats in the State under solid waste management system. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.980 crore has been allocated for Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin).

94. The Government is also extending support for construction of toilets in urban areas. So far, 1.76 lakh individual household latrines have been constructed during the current year and 89,866 individual household latrines are under construction. Besides this, 11,540 community toilet seats have been constructed and 3,678 community toilet seats are under construction. Integrated solid waste management projects have been sanctioned for 9 Corporations, 107 Municipalities and 400 Town Panchayats at a cost of Rs.969 crore. Source segregation and recycling are being promoted in all urban local bodies to improve the solid waste management. **A sum of Rs.600 crore has been allocated for the 'Swachh Bharat Mission' (Urban) in this Budget Estimates.**

Mission for Housing for the Poor

95. The Government continues to strive for creating hut-free Villages and slum-free Cities in Tamil Nadu. It has launched a Mission for Housing for the Poor in 2016-2017 by dovetailing funds from various schemes to pursue this vision.

96. Under the 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana' (PMAY – Rural), the Government of India has allotted 1.78 lakh houses for Tamil Nadu during 2016-2017 for which works are in progress. Another 20,000 houses were taken up during 2016-2017 under the Chief Minister's Solar Powered Green House Scheme at a cost of Rs.420 crore. **Under the PMAY (Rural), the Government will construct 1.76 lakh houses during 2017-2018 at a unit cost of Rs.1.70 lakh. Out of this, Government of India's contribution is Rs.72,000/- per house, while the State contributes Rs.98,000/- including the contribution of Rs.50,000/-provided for concrete roofing. Hence, out of the total cost of Rs.3,082.39 crore, Rs.1,761.98 crore would be the State's contribution. Under the 'Chief Minister's Solar Powered Green House Scheme', another 20,000 houses will be taken up for construction in 2017-2018 at a cost of Rs.420 crore. Totally Rs.3,502.39 crore has been allocated in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for the construction of 1.96 lakh houses.**

97. In urban areas, the Government is facing the twin challenges of providing affordable housing to the poor and middle class families and rehabilitating the poor and vulnerable families living in unhygienic slums, especially along water courses. Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB) has been taking up construction of tenements to rehabilitate such families. During 2016-2017, TNSCB has taken up construction of 9,888 tenements at an estimated cost of Rs.911.89 crore, besides supporting 1,77,791 units under Beneficiary Led Construction component at a total cost of Rs.5,503.08 crore. **In 2017-2018, an additional 20,000 tenements will be taken up for construction at a project cost of Rs.2,000 crore, besides supporting one**

lakh houses under Beneficiary Led Construction component at a total cost of Rs.3,250 crore. Further, the old slum tenements under the control of Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board will be taken up for reconstruction. This will enable the Government to increase the available housing units from the existing 33,000 to 50,000 tenements to accommodate more families.

98. Tamil Nadu Housing Board (TNHB) has been taking up construction of houses for Low Income Groups (LIG) and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) to increase the availability of affordable housing. **During 2017-2018, TNHB will construct 3,300 new housing units at a cost of Rs.808 crore, in addition to completing the ongoing works of constructing 22,178 housing units at a cost of Rs.3,707 crore. The Government will task the Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Fund Management Corporation with the operation of the Shelter Fund and raise money through Innovative Financial Vehicles from private investors including impact investors, to increase the availability of affordable houses under the EWS and LIG categories. The National Housing Bank has agreed to partner with us in this endeavour.**

Devolution to the Local Bodies

99. The Government has devolved Rs.21,951 crore to rural local bodies and Rs.15,499 crore to urban local bodies as devolutionary grants from 2012-2013 to 2016-2017. The Fifth State Finance Commission (SFC) has submitted its recommendations recently. The State Government has accepted the report and an Action Taken Report (ATR) on the SFC recommendations will be tabled in this Assembly session. **As per the recommendations of the Fourteenth Central Finance Commission, local bodies will receive Rs. 2,780 crore as General Basic Grants and Rs.560 crore as General Performance Grants in 2017-2018. Further, Rs.5,159 crore and Rs.4,054 crore will be devolved to the rural and urban local bodies as per the Fifth State Finance Commission recommendations. In 2017-2018, the total devolutionary grants to rural and urban local bodies will be Rs.6,870 crore and Rs.5,683 crore respectively.**

Election to Local Bodies

100. The Government has increased the reservation for women in local body posts to 50 per cent as a measure to achieve gender equity and empower them politically. The State Election Commission is making necessary preparations to conduct the elections and an amount of Rs.174 crore has been provided in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for this purpose.

Health and Family Welfare

101. The Government has been taking proactive measures to improve public health and health care services at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The concerted efforts of the Government have improved the health indicators in Tamil Nadu substantially. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) has been brought down from 24 per thousand live births in 2010 to 19 in 2015 and the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) from 79 per one lakh live births in 2010 to 67 in 2016. Tamil Nadu has

already achieved the National targets and the Millennium Development Goals, placing the State in a position to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals much ahead of the deadline.

102. To take these efforts forward, this Government will continue to strengthen the public health infrastructure and provide beneficiary oriented welfare programmes. To improve the accessibility of primary healthcare, **this Government will establish 30 new Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and upgrade 12 PHCs into 30 bedded PHCs in 2017-2018 at a cost of Rs.43.76 crore under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). The Government will also set up 96 polyclinics in Urban Primary Health Centres at a cost of Rs.15.09 crore under the National Urban Health Mission.**

103. Opening of four new medical Colleges in the last six years and increasing the intake in existing Medical Colleges have ensured adequate availability of qualified doctors as the available MBBS seats in Government Medical Colleges in Tamil Nadu have increased from 1,945 in 2011 to 2,750 in 2016-2017. **Due to the efforts of this Government, the number of post graduate medical seats has been increased from 1,188 in 2016-2017 to 1,362 in 2017-2018.**

104. The Government has been implementing the 'Tamil Nadu Urban Health Care Project' since 2016-2017 with loan assistance from JICA at a total cost of Rs.1,634 crore in order to enhance secondary and tertiary care services in urban areas. A sum of Rs.126 crore has been provided for this project in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

105. The Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme (CMCHIS), a flagship programme of this Government, has provided insurance cover for high end medical care to 1.58 crore families in private and Government hospitals. In 2016-2017, 3.39 lakh patients have availed treatment costing Rs.662.86 crore and the Government hospitals have earned Rs.225.28 crore through claim settlement under the scheme, which has been utilized for the development of their infrastructure. **I am delighted to inform that this insurance scheme has been further continued from January 11, 2017 with an additional 312 new procedures and an increased coverage of Rs.2 lakh per annum for specialized procedures. An amount of Rs.1,348 crore has been provided in the Budget Estimates for this purpose.**

106. The 'Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy Maternity Benefit Scheme', which is aimed at reducing MMR and IMR in the State has extended financial assistance of Rs.551.61 crore in 2016-2017 to 5.81 lakh pregnant women. **In order to fulfill an electoral promise, the Hon'ble Chief Minister has issued order enhancing this assistance from Rs.12,000/- to Rs.18,000/-. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, an amount of Rs.1,001 crore has been provided for this scheme.** This Government will continue to implement the 'Amma Baby Care Kit' scheme and the 'Amma Magapperu Sanjeevi' scheme. A sum of Rs.61 crore has been provided in this Budget Estimates for the distribution of sanitary napkins under the Menstrual Hygiene Programme.

107. **This Government is giving medicines, free of cost, in all Government Hospitals and Primary Health Centres. Further, in order to make medicines affordable, the use of generic drugs will be promoted and Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation will set up 10 sales outlets to sell generic medicines. Such generic drug selling stores will also be put up at major locations in towns and rural areas by co-operative institutions. This initiative will substantially reduce the burden of public on account of the expenses on drugs and medicines**.

108. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.10,158 crore has been provided for the Health Department.

School Education

109. The focus of this Government is to improve accessibility and quality of education in Schools and to enhance the learning of students through better teaching methods and learning aids. Through Geographic Information System (GIS) based mapping of Schools, the Government had identified unserved habitations and has opened 226 new Primary Schools since 2011. Wherever opening of a new school has been unviable due to sparse population, transport facilities have been provided to ensure the enrolment of children from such habitations in nearby Schools. Further, the Government has upgraded 113 Primary Schools to Middle Schools, 829 Middle Schools to High Schools and 402 High Schools to Higher Secondary Schools since 2011. **I am happy to announce the upgradation of 150 Middle Schools to High Schools and 100 High Schools to Higher Secondary Schools during 2017-2018. This Government has identified 36,930 out of School children who will be brought under the mainstream education systems during 2017-2018.**

110. This Government has placed special emphasis on providing necessary infrastructure facilities in Schools that include classrooms, science laboratories, drinking water facilities, compound walls and ramps and separate toilets for boys and girls. In 2016-2017, Rs.440.98 crore has been allocated for providing such required infrastructure facilities. Local bodies have provided Rs.57.63 crore in 2016-2017 exclusively for maintaining school toilets hygienically. This will be continued in 2017-2018 also. **An amount of Rs.352 crore, including loan assistance from NABARD, has been provided in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for infrastructure development in Schools.**

111. The Government is committed to removing all obstacles to achieve universal coverage in education by imparting free and compulsory education to all children and motivating them through various welfare schemes. **It will continue to provide four sets of uniform, school bags, footwear, study materials like textbooks, notebooks and geometry boxes in addition to cycles and bus-passes free of cost. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.1,503 crore has been provided for these welfare schemes. Further, Rs.758 crore has been provided for the supply of laptop computers.**

112. The Government has provided access to private Schools to the children belonging to disadvantaged and weaker sections of the society under the 'Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act'. Since inception, this scheme has benefited 3,28,910 children and in 2016-2017 alone, 97,506 children have been admitted to Private Schools. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, a sum of Rs.201 crore has been provided for this purpose.

113. This Government is providing a special cash incentive of Rs.5,000/- to all girl students studying in Government and Government aided Schools as a measure to reduce dropouts from classes X, XI and XII. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, a sum of Rs.314 crore has been provided for the special cash incentive scheme.

114. Though the Government of India is yet to release its share of about Rs.1,476 crore under the 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' (SSA) and Rs.1,266 crore under the 'Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan' (RMSA) as arrears for the previous years, the State Government will continue to provide adequate funds to implement these schemes effectively. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.2,656 crore and Rs.1,194 crore have been provided for SSA and RMSA respectively.

115. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.26,932 crore has been allocated for School Education.

Higher Education

116. Access, equity and quality constitutes the foundation of the Higher Education Policy of the State. Tamil Nadu has 584 Engineering Colleges, 518 Polytechnic Colleges and 1,486 Arts and Science Colleges with a total capacity of admitting 9.46 lakh students annually in Government and Private Colleges. In order to increase the accessibility of Higher Education to rural and remote areas, the Government has established 20 new Government Arts and Science Colleges, 4 new Government Engineering Colleges and 16 new Government Polytechnic Colleges since 2011. Further, the Government has introduced 959 additional courses in Government Arts and Science Colleges.

117. This Government is currently implementing the scheme of reimbursement of tuition fees to first generation graduate students to encourage students from educationally backward families to pursue Higher Education. Under this scheme, 2.29 lakh students have benefited during 2016-2017 and to implement this scheme in 2017-2018, a sum of Rs.680 crore has been allocated in the Budget Estimates. The efforts taken by the Government have increased the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher Education to 44.30 in 2015-2016 and the number of girls and Scheduled Caste students enrolled in Higher Education has increased from 2,51,293 and 60,854 in 2010-2011 to 3,02,522 and 1,07,013 in 2016-2017 respectively.

118. The Government has allocated Rs.320 crore in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for providing grants to universities, including Rs.139 crore for Annamalai University. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.3,680 crore has been allocated for the Higher Education Department.

Youth Welfare and Sports Development

119. The Government will continue to take special efforts to develop sports in the State. A High Altitude Training Centre is being established at Udhagamandalam at a cost of Rs.5 crore to develop stamina and fitness in athletes and to enhance their performance.

The Government is currently revamping the Aquatic Complex, Velachery for hosting National and International competitions. **It has provided a sum of Rs.25 crore for the year 2017-2018 to hold Village level games in all the 12,524 Village Panchayats. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, a sum of Rs.165 crore has been allocated for the Youth Welfare and Sports Development Department.**

Adi-Dravidar and Tribal Welfare

120. The Government is taking all measures to protect Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and is striving hard for their welfare and socio-economic development. There are 1,324 Adi-Dravidar hostels with a strength of 98,539 students, 42 Tribal hostels with 2,782 students and 314 Government Tribal Residential (GTR) Schools with 31,069 students. **In order to implement another electoral promise, this Government will enhance the food charges for college hostel students from Rs.875/- to Rs.1,000/- per month and for school hostel students from Rs.755/- to Rs.900/- per month.** This Government is committed to providing own buildings for all hostels and towards this end, construction of 30 hostels is currently in progress. **The Government will take up the construction of buildings for 24 more hostels at a cost of Rs.30.73 crore during 2017-2018. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, a sum of Rs.189 crore has been allocated for construction of buildings and Rs.120 crore has been allocated for food charges.**

121. An amount of Rs.69 crore has also been provided in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for providing bicycles free of cost to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students studying in 11th Standard in Government and Government aided Schools. To encourage the enrolment of girls in Schools, this Government has provided incentives to 4.92 lakh girl students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes during 2016-2017 and accordingly Rs.55 crore has been allocated for this scheme in 2017-2018. This Government has provided scholarships to 2.50 lakh Scheduled Caste students and 14,000 Scheduled Tribe students under the pre-matric scholarship schemes during 2016-2017. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.125 crore has been allocated for the pre-matric scholarship schemes.

122. In 2016-2017, 1.23 lakh students in Government and Government aided Colleges and 2.27 lakh students in Private Colleges have benefited from the post-matric scholarship scheme.

The Government of India has to release a balance of Rs.1,927.32 crore, which is the arrear receivable up to 2016-2017. The State Government has allocated Rs.1,580 crore during 2016-2017. **In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 also, Rs. 1,580 crore has been allocated for the post-matric scholarship schemes.**

123. The Government is supporting Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe families for their socio-economic development by extending financial assistance through the Tamil Nadu Adi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation (TAHDCO). In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.150 crore has been allocated under the Special Central Assistance for this purpose.

124. To improve infrastructure in 157 GTR Schools and Schools run by the Forest Department, works have been taken up during 2016-2017 with NABARD assistance at a total cost of Rs.49.84 crore.

The Government has been implementing the 'Comprehensive Tribal Development Programme' (CTDP) since 2011-2012 for taking up various infrastructure development activities in tribal areas and for providing financial support for the socio-economic development of Tribal families. **This Government has decided to establish two Model Residential Schools, along with staff quarters, in Jawadhu Hills at a total cost of Rs.24 crore, to ensure the accessibility of quality education to tribal students. This will augment the existing school facilities in that area and provide opportunity to students to complete their schooling upto higher secondary level.** In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.50 crore has been allocated under CTDP and Rs.37 crore has been provided for the development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

125. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, an amount of Rs.3,009 crore has been allocated for Adi Dravidar Welfare Department and Rs.265 crore has been allocated for Tribal Welfare Department.

Welfare of Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes and Denotified Communities

126. The Government is determined to support Backward Classes (BC), Most Backward Classes (MBC) and De-Notified Communities (DNC) for their socio-economic development and welfare. In 2016-2017, pre-matric scholarship has been provided to 72,000 students and Post-Matric scholarship has been provided to 7.02 lakh students. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.23 crore and Rs.182 crore have been provided for Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship schemes. **This Government will continue to distribute bicycles free of cost to students belonging to Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes and Denotified Communities, studying in 11th Standard in Government and Government aided Schools. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.180 crore has been provided for this scheme.**

127. The Government is running 1,338 hostels with a strength of 84,314 students. **In order to implement another electoral promise, this Government will enhance the food charges for the college hostel students from Rs.875/- to Rs.1,000/- per month and for school hostel students from Rs.755/- to Rs.900/- per month.** In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.24 crore has been provided for construction of hostels and Schools, and Rs.84 crore has been provided for food charges. An amount of Rs.988 crore has been provided in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for the

Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes and Denotified Communities Welfare Department.

Labour Welfare

128. There are 17 unorganized workers welfare boards under the Labour Welfare Department with a membership of 68.52 lakh workers. This includes 17,556 inter-State migrant workers who have been registered with the Tamil Nadu Construction Workers Welfare Board. In 2016-2017, a sum of Rs.115.25 crore has been distributed to the members of the unorganized workers welfare boards as welfare assistance. An amount of Rs.70 crore has been provided as grants to these boards in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

129. **As a measure to ameliorate the plight of the migrant construction workers living in unhealthy conditions at construction sites, the Government is constructing temporary accommodation at major locations around Chennai and other Cities in Tamil Nadu on need basis. These residential units will be made available on rental basis to employers to accommodate their construction workers.** In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.1,010 crore has been allocated for the Labour Welfare Department.

Social Welfare

130. Deeply committed to the values of a Welfare State, social security pension is being provided to vulnerable and economically poor sections of the society by providing Rs.1,000/- every month to senior citizens, widows, destitute, differently-abled and transgenders. This monthly pension is being disbursed through the bank accounts of individual beneficiaries. **In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.3,790 crore has been provided for these social security pensions.**

131. The pioneering schemes - the 'Girl Child Protection Scheme' and the 'Cradle Baby' scheme launched by the late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa, have ensured adequate protection of girl children. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, a sum of Rs.140 crore has been allocated for these schemes. Under the Marriage Assistance Schemes, eight gram of gold coin for Thirumangalyam along with a cash assistance of Rs.25,000/- for non-graduates and Rs.50,000/- for graduates and diploma holders are being provided. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.723 crore has been provided in total for all the Marriage Assistance Schemes. **Fulfilling another electoral promise, Hon'ble Chief Minister has issued orders extending support to one lakh working women per annum for purchase of two wheelers with 50 per cent subsidy, not exceeding Rs.20,000/-. A sum of Rs.200 crore is provided in the Budget Estimates for this scheme.**

132.The Government has been implementing the 'Puratchi Thalaivar MGR Nutritious Meal Programme' for improving nutritional levels and for increasing the enrolment of children in Schools through 43,143 noon-meal centres. With the objective of providing nutritious meal and supplementary nutrition to children below five years of age, pregnant women, lactating mothers and adolescent girls, the Government is implementing the Integrated

Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme through 54,439 Anganwadi Centres. A sum of Rs.1,687 crore and Rs.1,779 crore have been provided for the Nutritious Meal Programme and ICDS scheme respectively in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.4,781 crore has been allocated for Social Welfare Department.

Welfare of Government Employees and Pensioners

133.The Government has increased the maternity leave from six months to nine months to fulfill another electoral promise. **The Government has now constituted a Committee of Officials to study the recommendations of the Seventh Pay Commission in all aspects and to recommend appropriate pay revisions. Based on this report, revised pay scales will be fixed by the Government.** For the implementation of the New Health Insurance Scheme, Rs.290 crore has been allocated in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

134.This Government has extended the New Health Insurance Scheme to benefit the pensioners and Rs.123 crore has been allocated in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018 for the payment of premium for this scheme. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.22,394 crore has been allocated for pensions and other retirement benefits.

Welfare of Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees

135.The Government has extended various welfare schemes like health insurance, marriage assistance and social security pensions apart from providing cash assistance to Sri Lankan Tamils living in refugee camps. This Government will continue to press for dual citizenship to Sri Lankan Tamil refugees. In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, Rs.116 crore has been allocated for the welfare of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees.

Welfare of the Differently-Abled

136.The State is committed to providing all support and to extending welfare measures to the differently-abled persons in order to enable them to lead a normal life. The State Government has issued disability certificates to 11.79 lakh persons so far. A detailed enumeration will be carried out to ensure cent per cent coverage of differently-abled persons under various welfare measures. This Government is running 435 special Schools and 42 vocational training centres for the benefit of differently-abled persons. The State Government provides maintenance allowance of Rs.1,500/- per month to the severely orthopaedically affected persons, persons with muscular dystrophy and the mentally challenged. **Now, we propose to extend this enhanced monthly maintenance allowance of Rs.1,500/- to persons cured of leprosy but have suffered severe permanent disability.**

137. It is our commitment **to improve the quality of life for the differently-abled persons and towards this the following announcements are made:**

- **The number of retro-fitted scooters being distributed will be increased from 1,000 to 2,000 per annum at a cost of Rs.11.97 crore.**

- **The conveyance allowance of Rs.1,000/- per month being provided to the visually challenged and persons with locomotor disabilities will be extended to the hearing impaired Government employees.**
- **Smart canes will be distributed to 10,000 visually impaired persons in the year 2017-2018 at a cost of Rs.3.16 crore.**
- **Motorised Mobility Assistive Devices will be distributed for the first time to 1,000 persons affected by muscular dystrophy and paraplegia at a cost of Rs.6.50 crore.**
- **Skill development training will be imparted to 10,000 differently-abled persons in all the Districts at a cost of Rs.5 crore during the year 2017-2018.**
- **A pilot project for screening new born babies to identify hearing impairment will be launched in Chennai and Sivagangai at a cost of Rs.3.31 crore.**

138. The allocation for the Welfare of Differently-abled Department has been increased by 17.68 per cent over the Revised Budget Estimates 2016-2017 to Rs.466 crore for the year 2017-2018.

Welfare of the Minorities

139.The Government is committed to protecting the minorities and ensuring a sense of security among them, besides extending support for their welfare. The Government has been providing assistance to Christians for undertaking pilgrimage to Jerusalem and to Muslims for the Hajj pilgrimage. The monthly pension to the ulemas has been increased from Rs.1,000/- to Rs.1,500/- from 2016-2017. A sum of Rs.1 crore has been allotted by this Government during 2016-2017 to take up repair and renovation of churches.

Part B

Resources for financing the Budget

140.We will now look into the resources that have been identified to finance the projected expenditure in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

141.The State's Own Tax Revenue (SOTR) constitutes the major part of the revenue receipts of the State. The National and the global economies continue to be sluggish, particularly in the manufacturing sector, and this has affected SOTR significantly. These negative impacts on the economy will eventually constrain the State's own tax resources.

142.Commercial Taxes is the largest contributor to the State's resources. The State will be undergoing a major change in the indirect taxation system in 2017-2018 when the Government of India rolls out the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Though it is expected that the GST regime will affect the resources of a manufacturing State like Tamil Nadu considerably, the Government of India has agreed to compensate the loss for a period of five years. Since the Value Added Tax (VAT) regime is being replaced by the GST regime, no tax concessions are being announced in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018. Considering the above factors, revenue from Commercial Taxes has been estimated at Rs.66,522 crore in the Revised Estimates 2016-2017, and at Rs.77,234 crore in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

143. The Government has closed down 500 TASMAC shops in February 2017, in addition to the closure of 500 shops in 2016. This will have a significant impact on the State's resources. Keeping this in view, the Excise Duty collection has been projected at Rs.6,903 crore in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

The State has registered a negative growth this year in the collection of Stamp Duty and Registration Fees and the receipts have been estimated only at Rs.8,220 crore in 2017-2018. The revenue from Motor Vehicle Taxes is projected at Rs.5,418 crore during 2017-2018.

144. The SOTR estimate has been revised downward to Rs.87,287 crore in the Revised Estimates 2016-2017 and has been fixed at Rs.99,590 crore in the Budget Estimates 2 017-2018. The receipts under the State's Own Non-Tax Revenue have been estimated at Rs.12,318 crore in 2017-2018.

145. The adverse impact of the Fourteenth Finance Commission's recommendations continues to severely affect our resource availability. The Government of India has reduced its own commitment and increased State's share in Centrally Sponsored Schemes since 2015-2016, resulting in additional burden to the State Government. The State received Rs.20,354 crore as Central devolution in 2015-2016, which recorded a growth rate of only 20.98 per cent over 2014-2015. When we discount this growth rate with the normal growth in Central Tax collections of 18 per cent in 2015-2016, the net increase stands at 2.98 per cent only. In the Revised Estimates, the share in Central Taxes has been estimated at Rs.24,538 crore during 2016-2017 and Rs.27,224 crore in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018. The Grants-in-Aid have been estimated at Rs.20,709 crore in the Revised Estimates 2016-2017 and Rs.20,231 crore in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.

Fiscal Indicators

146. While the Total Revenue Receipts (TRR) of the State have been projected at Rs.1,59,363 crore in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, the Revenue Expenditure is estimated at Rs.1,75,293 crore, leaving the Revenue Deficit at Rs.15,930 crore. Despite an increase in Revenue Expenditure due to the additional commitment of the Government towards interest payments under the UDAY scheme, free power up to 100 units for domestic consumers and cooperative loan waiver scheme, the Revenue Deficit in 2017-2018 will be contained at the previous year level.

147. In 2016-2017, the Government has taken over the debt of TANGEDCO to the tune of Rs.22,815 crore, which has increased the Fiscal Deficit beyond the Tamil Nadu Fiscal Responsibility Act norm of 3 per cent of GSDP. However, Government of India has given specific authorization to exceed the limit to the extent of debt takeover from TANGEDCO and allowed the State to borrow beyond three per cent to absorb the burden of this debt. In view of this, a bill to amend the Tamil Nadu Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2003 will be introduced in this august House in this session.

148. In 2016-2017, the Fiscal Deficit will be Rs.61,341 crore which is 4.58 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product. If the debt

takenover from TANGEDCO by Government is excluded, the Fiscal Deficit in 2016-2017 will be Rs.38,526 crore, which will be 2.88 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product. The Capital Expenditure has been estimated at Rs.27,789 crore in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018. The Fiscal Deficit has been projected at Rs.41,977 crore, which is about 2.79 per cent of GSDP in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018. This will be within the norms prescribed. It is estimated that Rs.41,965 crore would be raised as net borrowings, as against the permissible limit of Rs.45,119 crore. The net outstanding debt at the end of 31st March, 2018 will be Rs.3,14,366 crore including the debt taken over from TANGEDCO and the Debt-GSDP ratio will be 20.90 per cent which is well below the Debt-GSDP norm of 25 per cent.

149. The Medium Term Fiscal Plan has been given as an annexure to this Budget Speech and I request that this may be taken as read as part of this speech.

150. These Budget Estimates have been prepared under severe resource constraints. The uncertainty in the domestic economy continues. This Government is working hard to overcome this and to reverse the economic downtrend. Though the Revenue Deficit remains high, which is above norms, the Debt-GSDP ratio continues to remain within the prescribed norms. However, the Revenue Deficit will be contained during 2017-2018 at the same level of 2016-2017. The Fiscal Deficit breaching the norms in 2016-2017 is only temporary due to TANGEDCO's debt takeover.

In 2017-2018, Fiscal Deficit will be brought within norms. The Government will leave no stone unturned to bring the State back on the path of fiscal consolidation. We hope, with the efforts taken by the Government, the economic growth will get revived, bringing more resources to the State and paving the way to move forward on the path of development.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Even though misfortune may rise like a flood
A wise man overcomes it by thoughts bold

(Kural 622)

151. These are the unfailing words of Thiruvalluvar who says that a wise man with a determined mind will conquer even a flood of troubles. Our revered leader Puratchi Thalaivi J Jayalalithaa, the saviour of poor who guided, led and protected us like a divine light is no more with us. Her loss is irreparable to all of us and for the State. She has handed over the lamp of governance to us for dispelling the darkness of ignorance and poverty from this land and light up the lives of poor and the downtrodden. Amidst the political turbulence created by some of our brothers, who have been misguided by some, that lamp has been protected and it is our duty to keep it as an eternal lamp to continue our journey towards progress. Under the leadership of our Hon'ble Chief Minister, who is a man of practical wisdom, we will march forward and implement all the schemes initiated by our revered leader Puratchi Thalaivi J Jayalalithaa and formulate many more people-friendly programmes.

152. I thank the Hon'ble Chief Minister and all my Cabinet Colleagues for guiding me in

formulating this Budget. This Budget has been prepared within the framework that has been given by our revered leader Puratchi Thalaivi J Jayalalithaa who has mingled in our life and always guiding us. I am always indebted to her guiding spirit.

153. I convey my thanks to Thiru. K. Shanmugam I.A.S., Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department and all other officials of the Finance Department who have been working tirelessly on the preparation of the Budget Estimates.

154.With this, Hon'ble Speaker Sir, I commend the Budget Estimates for the year 2017-2018 for the approval of this august House.

Nandri

Vanakkam

APPENDIX

MEDIUM TERM FISCAL PLAN

The State Government shall lay a Medium Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP) before the Legislative Assembly along with the Budget in accordance with section 3(1) of the Tamil Nadu Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2003 (TNFRA).

As per Section 3(2) of the said Act, the MTFP shall also set forth a multi year rolling target for the prescribed fiscal indicators like Revenue Deficit, Fiscal Deficit, etc., with specification of underlying assumptions made to arrive at those projections. Complying with the said provisos under the Tamil Nadu Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2003, a Medium Term Fiscal Plan for the current financial year and next two years, i.e., from 2018-2019 is hereby placed before the Legislative Assembly.

Objectives

The MTFP has been structured with the objectives of balancing the developmental expenditure and fiscal prudence, facilitating high economic growth that would create enough fiscal space for investments in key sectors. The State Government is implementing large number of welfare schemes for improving the social security, education, health, etc. Simultaneously, the State has to meet the ever increasing administrative expenditure, mainly due to periodic hike in Dearness Allowance, increments, creation of new posts and filling up of vacancies. Apart from spending heavily on the welfare schemes and administrative expenditure, due importance is being paid to capital expenditure for building roads and bridges, irrigation and power projects. Despite all these constraints, the State Government is committed to achieving fiscal consolidation by complying with the roadmap set forth by the Central Finance Commission.The MTFP will ensure compliance with the norms of fiscal prudence, such as, containing the Revenue Deficit to the minimum, maintaining Fiscal Deficit within three per cent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) and limiting Outstanding Debt to GSDP ratio within the prescribed limits of the Central Finance Commission during 2017-2020 and thereafter, with the exception of the year 2018-2019.

Future Prospects

The nominal growth of GSDP is projected based on the new 2011-2012 series at constant prices and is adopted in the Budget. As per the present trend, it is expected that the State's economy will grow at a higher pace in the coming years.

I.Revenue Receipts

The Total Revenue Receipts of the State Government, including the Central Transfers, are estimated at Rs.1,59,363 crore in 2017-2018. Its important components and their growth trends are discussed below.

1.State's Own Tax Revenue

The State economy is slowly picking up, which is evident from the improvement in GSDP growth rates from 4.85% in 2012-2013 to 8.79% in 2015-2016 at 2011-2012 constant prices. During 2016-2017, GSDP is expected to grow at 7.94% at 2011-2012 constant prices. It is also anticipated that the economy will grow faster due to the concerted efforts of the Government and thereby enabling the State to achieve a higher economic growth rate during the current financial year.

However, the continuing sluggishness of the global and domestic economies and the demonetization of specified bank notes have affected the State economy in a significant manner. The negative impacts on the economy have eventually limited the State's Own Tax Revenue.

The State's Own Tax Revenue is estimated to be Rs.87,287 crore in the Revised Estimates 2016-2017.

It is estimated to increase to Rs.99,590 crore in the Budget Estimates for 2017-2018. A growth rate of 15.20% and 13.78% is assumed for the years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 respectively. Salient features of the major components of the State's Own Tax Revenue are discussed below.

- ✶ Considering the roll out of Goods and Services Tax (GST) during 2017-2018, which is expected to have an impact on the resources of the State, the receipts from the Commercial Taxes are estimated to be Rs.77,234 crore in the Budget Estimates 2017-2018.
- ✶ Taking into account the impact of the recent closure of 500 more TASMAC shops and an over all of 1,000 shops, during the current financial year and the present trend of receipts, the State Excise Duty collection has been estimated at Rs.6,903 crore during 2017-2018. The low economic growth, demonetization and the ban on sale of property in unapproved layouts have dented the receipts from Stamp Duty and Registration Charges severely. Considering these factors, receipts from Stamp Duty and Registration Charges are expected to be Rs.8,220 crore during 2017-2018 as against Rs.7,985 crore estimated in Revised Estimates 2016-2017.

The collections under the Taxes on Motor Vehicles is estimated in the Budget Estimates

for 2017-2018 at Rs.5,418 crore as against Rs.4,733 crore estimated in the Revised Estimates 2016-2017.

2. Non-Tax Revenue

The State's Own Non-Tax Revenue has been estimated at Rs.12,318 crore in the Budget Estimates for 2017-2018. Since the Government services are either delivered free of cost or at nominal fees and the mining potential of the State being limited, the Non-Tax Revenue has been estimated to be marginally higher than the Revised Estimates 2016-2017. A growth rate of 8% is assumed for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020.

3.Share in Central Taxes

The Central Finance Commissions, one after the other, have gradually decreased the inter-se-share of Tamil Nadu. The inter-se-share of Tamil Nadu from Thirteenth Finance Commission to Fourteenth Finance Commission has witnessed a slide down from 4.969% to 4.023% in the general divisible pool and from 5.047% to 4.104% in case of Service Tax pool. However, increased flow of resources is expected to be devolved to the States on account of the resource augmentation by the Central Government through revision of taxes and duties. The Share in Central Taxes for the State has been estimated at Rs.27,224 crore during 2017-2018 in the Budget Estimates based on the projection given in the Union Budget 2017-2018. A growth rate of 14% is assumed for the financial years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 also.

4.Grants-in- Aid from the Union Government

The Grants-in-Aid from the Government of India have been estimated at Rs.20,231 crore in the Budget Estimates for 2017-2018 by taking into account the provisions made in the Union Budget 2017-2018 towards Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Fourteenth Finance Commission grants. For the financial years of 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, a growth rate of 10% has been assumed.

II.Revenue Expenditure

The revenue expenditure during 2017-2018 is estimated at Rs.1,75,293 crore which shows a growth of 10.06% over Revised Estimates 2016-2017. The main components are explained below:

- ✶ The allocation for salaries is Rs.46,332 crore and for pensions and other retirement benefits is Rs.20,577 crore in the Budget Estimates for 2017-2018. This estimation doesn't include the expenditure that will arise due to implementation of Seventh Pay Commission recommendations. The allocation forms 38.17% of the Total Revenue Expenditure. Considering the additional expenditure due to Pay revision based on the Seventh Pay Commission recommendations, periodic hikes in Dearness Allowance, increments and filling up of vacancies, a growth rate of 31.58% for salaries and 34.37% for pensions and other retirement benefits for 2018-2019 and 10% for both salaries and pensions for 2019-2020 are assumed.

- For Subsidies and Grants, Rs.72,616 crore is allocated in the Budget Estimates for 2017-2018. The allocation includes expenditure for various ongoing welfare schemes like food subsidy, power subsidy, scholarships, housing schemes, etc., and additional commitments to new schemes like co-operative loan waiver and free power to domestic consumers up to 100 units, etc. Further, the devolution to Local Bodies has been increased and included in the Budget Estimates towards implementation of the Fifth State Finance Commission recommendations, based on the assumption of the growth in State's Own Tax Revenue. A growth rate of 6.5% is assumed for 2018-2019 and 7.05% for 2019-2020.

- Expenditure on Non-wage Operations and Maintenance is projected at Rs.9,764 crore in the Budget Estimates for 2017-2018. This is mainly on account of maintenance, administrative expenses, fuel cost, distribution of uniform to school students, etc. A growth rate of 5.22% is assumed for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020.

- In the Budget Estimates 2017-2018, the Interest Payments have been estimated at Rs.25,982 crore, which is 14.82% of the Total Revenue Expenditure. It is estimated at Rs.21,397 crore in the Revised Estimates 2016-2017. The increased estimation in the Budget Estimates for 2017-2018 over the Revised Estimates 2016-2017 is due to additional commitment of the Government towards payment of interest under the UDAY scheme. The ratio of Interest Payments to Total Revenue Receipts will be 16.30% in 2017-2018. This is expected to be 16.77% in 2018-2019 and 17.38% in 2019-2020.

III.Capital Expenditure

The State is paying special attention to capital expenditure. This is once again proved by the increased allocation of Rs.24,193 crore in the Revised Estimates 2016-2017 for Capital Expenditure as against Rs.22,369 crore in the Revised Budget Estimates and Rs.27,789 crore in the Budget Estimates for 2017-2018. This is expected to grow further at 8.06% in 2018-2019 and 10.07% in 2019-2020.

IV.Revenue Deficit and Fiscal Deficit

The tax revenue growth has been lower than that estimated in the Revised Budget 2016-2017 due to the uncertainty in domestic economy. There is significant drop in State's Own Tax Revenue growth rate, especially in the receipts from Stamps and Registration charges. Thus, the Revenue Deficit for 2017-2018 is expected to be at Rs.15,930 crore. Fiscal Deficit for 2016-2017 is estimated at Rs.61,341 crore in the Revised Estimates 2016-2017 as against the Budget Estimation of Rs.40,534 crore and this is 4.58% of the GSDP, breaching the norm prescribed in the TNFRA. This breach in FRBM norms is only due to TANGEDCO's debt takeover and is temporary. Therefore, Fiscal Deficit for 2017-2018 is expected to come down to less than 3% of the GSDP and estimated at Rs.41,977 crore, which is 2.79% of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). The

implementation of Seventh Pay Commission recommendations based on the report of the officials committee will increase the burden on State's finances for a year or two. In the forthcoming years, Fiscal Deficit to GSDP ratio will be 3.18% in 2018-2019 and 2.82% in 2019-2020.

V. Borrowings

The estimates for receipt and repayment of borrowings have been finalized on the basis of overall borrowing ceiling fixed by the Government of India based on the formula indicated by 14th Finance Commission. The Government plans to borrow a net amount of Rs.41,965 crore only against the estimated Net Borrowing Ceiling of Rs.45,119 crore in 2017-2018. The outstanding debt including provident fund will be Rs.3,14,366 crore as on 31.03.2018. This will constitute only 20.90% of GSDP.

VI.Guarantees

The outstanding guarantees for each year have to be restricted at a level of 100 per cent of the Total Revenue Receipts in the preceding year or 10 per cent of the GSDP, whichever is lower. The outstanding guarantees as on 31.03.2016 was 42.14 per cent of Total Revenue Receipts in the preceding year and 4.25 per cent of GSDP. The outstanding risk weighted guarantees for each year have to be kept at a level of 75 per cent of the Total Revenue Receipts in the preceding year or 7.5 per cent of GSDP whichever is lower. The outstanding risk weighted guarantees as on 31.03.2016 stood at 8.29 per cent of Total Revenue Receipts in the preceding year and 0.84 per cent of GSDP.

Conclusion

The economy is slowly picking up which is evident from the increase in GSDP growth rate in real terms, from 4.85% in 2012-2013 to 7.94% in 2016-2017.

However, there is a significant fall in the growth of the State's Own Tax Revenue, especially due to the fall in Stamps and Registration, which has negatively impacted the revenue receipts. Further, the decrease in share of Central Taxes due to Fourteenth Finance Commission's recommendations, and the increase in States' share in Centrally Sponsored Schemes have also hampered the State's Finances. The tax realisation in commercial taxes is expected to improve due to the revision of tax rates on petrol and diesel. The trends in expenditure are steady except for the hike in salaries and pensions due to implementation of Seventh Central Pay Commission recommendations based on the report of official committee constituted for this purpose. In spite of these constraints on Revenue Receipts, the overall Fiscal Deficit, net borrowings and outstanding debt-GSDP ratio will be within the permissible limits except Fiscal Deficit during 2018-2019. The State Government will continue to take concerted efforts for faster economic recovery, which will pave way for enhancing the State's fiscal position and improve the fiscal consolidation.

For Tirunelveli District, 102 schemes costing Rs. 88.21 crore launched

Speech of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami, inaugurating the schemes for the Tirunelveli Zone on 08.03.2017 (*English Translation*)

Paying my respects to Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalavi Amma,

Respected District Collector who is presiding over this pleasant function,

Hon'ble Transport Minister Thiru. M.R. Vijaya Baskar, Hon'ble Minister for Adi Dravidar and Scheduled Tribes Welfare Tmt. V.M.Rajalakshmi who are gracing this pleasant function,

Other participants in the function - Members of Parliament and Legislative Assembly, Secretaries to Government, High officials of the Government, Officers of the Police Department, former MLAs, former MPs, Co-operative Society officers, Newspaper and Media friends, Elders and partymen,

I offer my respects to all of you.

Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma converted people's energy as the propelling force and ruled Tamil Nadu as 'Maha Sakthi' on the path of Perarignar Anna with the lofty goal of 'Service to people is service to God' and offered good governance in the direction shown by Puratchi Thalaivar MGR.

Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Amma was the voice of the re-awakened Tamil race for its rights, an incomparable Deity, the Guardian Angel who got for Tamils the justice that was denied to them, a wonderful incarnation who added glory to womenfolk and an incomparable leader who knew only victory – from film world to Srirangam.

World Women's Day is observed today. On this day, I bow in the direction where Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, the guardian angel for women, lives.

Amma's Government got the rare opportunity, due to Amma's blessings, of conducting the inaugurals, in succession, of schemes executed in a short span of time though they would speak the achievements for centuries. Most of these schemes are new ones, conceived after deep deliberations and announced under Rule 110. Many of these schemes have been implemented; I am happy to say, the remaining ones are being executed speedily.

You all know well how some people remained incapable of implementing the promises they lavishly made for political gains. But, Hon'ble Amma would take steps for implementation of a scheme only after deep deliberation on the number and type of people who would benefit out of it and on how soon the benefits would flow. That is why all her schemes find a place in history.

Hon'ble Amma who declared 'I am by the people; I am for the people' dedicated her entire life for the welfare of people alone. That was why Amma was able to alter the destiny of Tamil Nadu and improve it into a prosperous State with all facilities and one fit for a happy living. This endeared Amma to all sections of people. Hon'ble Amma's glory will remain forever – till the earth and humans last. Hon'ble Amma's rule also will last forever.

By way of carrying out Hon'ble Amma's ideas, this Government, I feel, has been directed by Hon'ble Amma to divide the State into different zones and inaugurate the completed schemes and those that are to be started.

For fulfilling the promises Hon'ble Amma gave in the election manifesto of the AIADMK in the last Assembly Election and for improving the standard of living of the people of Tamil Nadu, I signed the files for 5 special schemes on the very first day of taking over as Chief Minister.

- We introduced the Amma two-wheeler scheme at a cost of Rs.200 crore to facilitate

commuting to and fro work places and to benefit one lakh working women every year.

- Orders have been issued to increase the financial assistance to pregnant women under the Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Maternity Assistance Scheme from Rs.12,000/- to Rs.18,000/-. Six lakh mothers will benefit every year.
- Orders have been issued for construction of 5,000 houses at a cost of Rs.85 crore by way of inaugurating a separate housing scheme for fishermen in Tamil Nadu.
- The monthly dole to unemployed youth has been doubled. This will benefit 55,228 youths.
- For gradual introduction of prohibition, Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma had already issued orders and 500 retail liquor shops were closed down. In continuation of that, we have now closed down 500 more liquor shops.

This Hon'ble Amma Government that took over office with the blessings of Hon'ble Amma has issued orders for the implementation of many good schemes in the short span it is in office.

- Farmers have been affected due to the severe drought caused by the failure of monsoons in the current year. To remove their difficulties, a drought relief assistance of Rs.2,247 crore in respect of crop loss is being distributed.
- Orders have been issued for efficient management of water resources and for frugal use of water to manage the drought, for conservation of rain water and creation of new water resources and for the revival of the good old 'kudimaramathu' scheme for rejuvenation of water bodies with public participation and its implementation at a cost of Rs.100 crore in the current financial year alone.
- Thirty thousand fishermen families whose livelihood was affected due to the oil leak in

the sea off Ennore, Chennai on 28.01.2017 were given an interim relief of Rs.5,000/- each, totalling Rs.15 crore.

- An officers' committee has been set up to make necessary recommendations for revision of Tamil Nadu Government employees's pay in the light of the Central Government's 7th pay commission recommendations.

On 04.03.2017, new schemes costing Rs.1,486.98 crore were inaugurated and foundation stone laid in 7 Districts under Chennai zone.

Yesterday morning 3,971 schemes completed at a cost of Rs.330.84 crore were inaugurated in the Districts of Salem, Namakkal, Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri under the Salem zone.

Yesterday afternoon, I inaugurated 2,603 schemes that have been completed at a cost of Rs.623.55 crore in the Districts of Ariyalur, Karur, Nagapattinam, Perambalur, Pudukottai, Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Tiruchirapalli under the Tiruchirappalli zone.

In continuation of them, I am extremely happy in inaugurating the completed schemes in the Districts of Tirunelveli, Kanniyakumari and Thoothukudi under the Tirunelveli zone.

Farmers and horticulture labour abound in Tirunelveli District. In Sangam literature, land has been divided into five types and categorised as Kurinji, Mullai, Marudham, Neithal and Paalai as per the nature of the terrain. It is rare that a District contains all the five types of land. Only Tirunelveli District has that distinction. The District sports mountains, forests, fields, sea shore and dry regions too. Another distinction of Tirunelveli District is that it has a large number of schools and colleges. That is why, Palayamkottai is called the 'Oxford of South India'. Mahakavi Bharathiyar who sang 'Tamil Nadu excels in education' belongs to Thoothukudi District. Such is the greatness of Tirunelveli District.

Kanniyakumari was the place that acted as a catalyst for the world renowned Swami Vivekananda to attain wisdom (gnanam).

Hence, I am extremely happy to participate in this function here today.

In Tirunelveli District, 102 schemes costing Rs. 88.21 crore are being inaugurated today. They include a centre of excellence for baby care and a hostel building for nurses training school in Tirunelveli Medical College (Rs.27.60 crore), proposed residential quarters for sanitary workers (Rs.14.98 crore), office buildings and drinking water development works and a 110 KV power sub-station at Karanthaneri.

In Thoothukudi District, 822 schemes, costing Rs.124.90 crore have been inaugurated today. They include buildings and student hostels for constituent colleges of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University at Nagalapuram, student hostel for V.O.C. Engineering college, Panchayat Union Office Buildings, anganwadi buildings, green houses and Panchayat Service Centres.

In Kanniyakumari District, 174 works costing Rs.22.50 crore have been completed. They include a 500 tonne storing capacity warehouse at the Monday Shandy Regulated Marketing Centre (Rs.50 lakh), an urban exhibition/shelter at Kanniyakumari for marketing at fair price, quality products of artisans (Rs.2.40 crore), residential quarters for sanitary workers (Rs.1.50 crore) and a multi-purpose indoor stadium.

Totally, 1,098 schemes costing Rs.235.61 crore have been completed and I am extremely happy to inaugurate them for the use of people.

Puratchi Thalaivar MGR remained a friend of fishermen. In his footsteps, Hon'ble Amma remained a mother to them. Whenever hardships confront fishermen, steps are taken on a war footing and their distress removed.

The steps taken by Hon'ble Amma resulted in the release of 2,541 fishermen. On March 6, 2017, Sri Lankan Navy opened fire on Rameswaram fishermen who were fishing in the Palk Bay. Thiru. Britjo died in this shooting. I was much distressed when I heard the news. I ordered an immediate assistance of Rs.5 lakh to the bereaved family; I also directed the District administration to give continuous treatment to another fisherman injured in the shooting. I wrote a letter to the Prime Minister to take steps to bring to a halt immediately Sri Lankan Navy's excesses. In deference to the State Government's request, the Central Government also sought an explanation from the Sri Lankan Government. I firmly declare that the Amma Government, in the footsteps of Hon'ble Amma will ever be supportive, friendly and affectionate to fishermen.

After 140 years, an unprecedented drought has now struck Tamil Nadu, affecting farmers greatly. By way of protecting them, the Hon'ble Amma Government passed orders immediately to disburse a drought relief of Rs.2,247 crore towards crop loss. The relief distribution started at Chennai on 06.03.2017. In Districts, Hon'ble Ministers will hand over to farmers, orders for the relief amount and it will be immediately credited to farmers' bank accounts. I wish to inform that 32,30,191 farmers will benefit from it.

To provide sufficient employment opportunities to agriculture labour rendered jobless due to drought, the ceiling under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has been increased from 100 days to 150 days.

To fight drinking water shortage in rural areas, augmenting works of water resources and upgradation of drinking water system, costing Rs. 350 crore have been ordered to be implemented through the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat.

In urban areas, similar works costing Rs.160 crore will be implemented through the Department of Municipal Administration and Water Supply.

Orders have been issued for the upgradation of structures for ground water conservation and for re-charging of groundwater through the Department of Public Works at a cost of Rs.25 crore.

Hon'ble Amma Government is implementing all these schemes, keeping the poor and the downtrodden in the centre.

Particular mention should be made about the numerous schemes framed by the Hon'ble Amma Government for women's welfare and protection. Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma used to say: 'Women and children are my two eyes'. At the beginning of my speech itself, I had mentioned that of the 5 schemes for which orders were passed by this Government on the very first day in office, two pertained to women's welfare. I am mentioning this again because it is World Women's Day today. On this World Women's Day, the Amma Government, following the path shown by Hon'ble Amma, conveys its greetings to all the women, including those assembled here. You know without my prompting, that it is only the Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma's Government that lavished women with innumerable welfare schemes. They include Cradle Baby Scheme, Girl Child Protection Scheme, Self Help Groups for women, All Women's Police Stations, a first in whole of India, All Women Commando Force, All Women Police Force, conferring the right to use the first letter of the mother's name as initial for the wards, Kalpana Chawla Award for women for acts of bravery, financial assistance for poor women for marriage, marriage assistance to women graduates and diploma holders to encourage women, distribution of mixie, grinder and fan at no cost to reduce the work load of women, distribution of sanitary napkins at no cost to adolescent girls to improve their personal hygiene, rest rooms for women and maternity service round-the-clock. Another distinction is that it is Hon'ble Amma who had instituted a high level award –Avvaiyar Award – to encourage women doing social service.

Hon'ble Amma's grand policy is : 'all should get all things; want should become a thing of the past'. Hon'ble Amma trained us to work tirelessly, on that policy line, for the upliftment of people. This Government, following the path of Hon'ble Amma, is working day and night ceaselessly so that all people get all things.

All schemes implemented by Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma's Government centre around the welfare of the poor and the marginalized. Hence, I lovingly request all people to fully utilize the benefits of these schemes and progress in life.

I convey my hearty thanks to the District Collector and all others including the high officials of the Government who have made excellent arrangements for the success of this function.

Nandri! Vanakkam!

Kudimaramathu scheme to rejuvenate water bodies

To deal with drought and take up the management of water resources, the Tamil Nadu Government, functioning under the guidelines chalked out by Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, has issued orders for reviving the age-old 'kudimaramathu' scheme for restoration of water bodies with beneficiaries' contribution.

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami inaugurated on 13.03.2017, the 'kudimaramathu' works to rejuvenate the Manimangalam lake in Manimangalam Village, Kancheepuram District to mark the inauguration of the 1,519 kudimaramathu works in 30 Districts at a cost of Rs.100 crore.

Under the 'kudimaramathu' scheme, works like restoration and strengthening of supply channels, channels, lakes, sluices and other water bodies, restructuring weirs and sluices and removal of weeds in the waterways are to be undertaken.

On the same day, in the Districts, 'kudimaramathu' works for the renovation of water bodies and channels will be inaugurated under the presidentship of Hon'ble Ministers and in the presence of MPs, MLAs and District Collectors.

Chief Minister announces slew of schemes for Tiruchi Zone

Speech of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami on 07.03.2017, inaugurating the Government schemes for Tiruchi Zone *(English Translation)*

Hon'ble Food Minister Thiru. R. Kamaraj who has graced this pleasant function,

Hon'ble Minister for Handlooms and Textiles Thiru. O.S.Manian,

Hon'ble Minister for Public Health and Family Welfare Dr.C.Vijayabaskar,

Hon'ble Minister for Tourism Thiru.Vellamandi N.Natarajan,

Hon'ble Minister for Transport Thiru. M.R.Vijayabaskar,

Hon'b le Minister for Backward Classes and Minorities Welfare Tmt. S.Valarmathi,

Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture Thiru. R.Doraikannu,

Members of Parliament and Legislative Assembly,

High officials of the Government, Officials of the Police Department,

Friends of the Print and Electronic Media,

I offer my humble greetings to all of you.

I bow with reverence in the direction where Puratchi Thalaivi Amma lives.

With the blessings of Hon'ble Amma, the Amma Government has got the rare opportunity of conducting inaugural functions successively for several schemes completed in a very short time.

Most of these schemes are the ones announced by Hon'ble Amma under Rule 110. A large number of them have been completed. The rest, I am happy to say, are being implemented.

Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma was people's Chief Minister; was a model for world leaders.

Tamil Nadu continues to remain the premier State on account of her tireless work.

This Government is a continuation of Hon'ble Amma's rule. Hence, it will fulfill Amma's aspirations and desires.

On 04.03.2017, I inaugurated 7,506 schemes completed at a cost of Rs.1,375.95 crore in 7 Districts in Chennai Zone; laid the foundation for 2 new schemes costing Rs.111.03 crore.

Following Chennai Zone, I inaugurated 3,971 schemes costing Rs.330.84 crore in the Districts of Salem, Namakkal, Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri. In continuation of this, I am proud to participate, now, in the inauguration of schemes for the Tiruchi Zone.

Whenever Hon'ble Amma visited Tiruchi, she was a picture of happiness.

Once, speaking at a public meeting at Tiruchi, she opened her heart and said: 'Though I rule from Chennai Fort St.George, my heart, somehow revolves around only Tiruchi Rock Fort'.

Now, this event of inaugurating 2,603 schemes costing Rs.623.55 crore in the Districts of Ariyalur, Karur, Nagapattinam, Perambalur, Pudukkottai, Thanjavur, Tiruchirappalli and Tiruvarur under Tiruchi Zone will echo the glory of Amma who has attained divinity.

The schemes inaugurated today at Tiruchi will greatly benefit the poor and the downtrodden. It is certain people will soulfully hail Amma's Government.

Tiruchi District occupies an unique place in Tamil Nadu history. I am proud to say it is only Hon'ble Amma who unveiled the statue of Chinnasamy, a martyr in the language agitation, to perpetuate his memory to the future generation.

By setting up a National Law School in Srirangam constituency which elected her to the Legislative Assembly once, Hon'ble Amma brought glory to the whole of Tamil Nadu.

Through a host of schemes like an Engineering College at Srirangam, an Arts and Science college at Srirangam, a horticulture college for women, the first of its kind in India, a 'Yatri Nivas' for devotees from other places visiting Srirangam Arulmigu Ranganathar temple, day-long annadhanam at Arulmigu Ranganathar temple and a newsprint and paper factory at Mondipatti, Hon'ble Amma immersed Tiruchi District in happiness.

This Government, blessed by Hon'ble Amma, has, even in this short duration, taken steps to implement many schemes.

Particularly, this Government gives great importance to agriculture schemes to develop the Districts in the Cauvery basin.

- To manage the water needs of agricultural operations Hon'ble Amma ordered 100 per cent subsidy to small and micro farmers for setting up micro irrigation structures; from 2011 – 2012 till date, more than Rs.1,000 crore subsidy has been given to 1,83,251 farmers;
- In Hon'ble Amma's regime, Rs.347 crore subsidy has been disbursed for purchase of agricultural machineries and implements;
- As per the promise made by Hon'ble Amma during the last Assembly election, crop loans of small and micro farmers and farm related long term loans to the tune of Rs.5,318.73 crore have been waived; this has released 12,02,075 farmers from debt burden and they are hailing Hon'ble Amma heartily.

In the Cauvery Waters Dispute, the final order of the Cauvery Tribunal was published in the Central Government's gazette on 19.02.2013 on account of the consistent efforts of Hon'ble Amma. Hon'ble Amma continued to insist on the setting up of the Cauvery Management Board and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee as per the Tribunal's recommendation in its final order. This Government which follows the footsteps of Hon'ble Amma, I wish to state, will continue to echo her voice and succeed in its efforts soon.

As our due share of water was not received from Karnataka State last year, Mettur dam could not be opened on the scheduled date. To help delta farmers take up 'kuruvai' cultivation without difficulty, Hon'ble Amma announced a Rs.54.65 crore package for the cultivation. This enabled the delta farmers to take up kuruvai cultivation in an unprecedented 3.16 lakh acres during the times of delayed opening of Mettur Dam and produce 7.53 lakh tonnes of paddy.

This was followed by an announcement and implementation by Hon'ble Amma, of a special samba package, costing Rs. 64.30 crore, for cultivation of samba crop by publicizing the method of direct sowing in delta Districts when Karnataka State did not release our due

share of water. This had helped in raising paddy crops in 11.92 lakh acres in samba and thaladi seasons.

Anticipating farmers' distress on account of crop loss due to the deficient North-East Monsoon, Government took great efforts to popularize the new crop insurance scheme among farmers, particularly delta farmers. In the interest of farmers, Government paid Rs.410 crore to insurance companies as premium subsidy for crop insurance. Four lakhs ninety-nine thousand farmers were brought under this insurance scheme, covering more than 90 per cent of the paddy grown fields in the delta Districts. Steps are being taken for speedy disbursal of compensation to farmers for the crop loss.

To help farmers undertake rain-fed crop cultivation in Tamil Nadu in a successful way in the next four years, a huge Rs. 803 crore scheme, the first of its kind in the whole country, has been announced. With the primary agricultural co-operative bank as the nodal agency, the Government is taking steps to develop 10 lakh hectares of rain fed land through forming 1,000 clusters, each covering 1,000 hectares, in the next 4 years.

The 100 day work ceiling under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has been increased to 150 days to provide employment opportunities to agriculture labour affected by dearth of work due to drought.

Orders have been issued and works undertaken speedily for upgrading water resources and drinking water distribution in rural areas through the Rural Development and Panchayat Department at a cost of Rs.350 crore to fight drinking water scarcity due to drought.

Likewise, to remove drinking water scarcity in urban areas on account of drought, Rs. 160 crore has been sanctioned and works undertaken to augment water resources and drinking water distribution.

To develop water resources like conservation of ground water and recharging structures of ground water, works have been undertaken at a cost of Rs.25 crore.

A crop loan of Rs.3,028 crore has been disbursed through co-operative banks last year alone.

Farmers in Tamil Nadu have been greatly affected due to the severe drought caused by monsoon failure in the current year. The Government, succeeding Hon'ble Amma, has immediately ordered a grant of Rs.2,247 crore to farmers as crop loss drought relief. The relief distribution was inaugurated in Chennai on 06.03.2017. The Hon'ble Ministers have been requested to distribute the relief orders in every District. The relief amount will be credited to farmers' bank accounts on 09.03.2017. This will benefit 32,30,191 drought affected farmers.

Dry fodder godowns are being opened at Taluk level in all Districts, including delta Districts.

Also, steps are being taken to manage efficiently water resources in the State to fight the drought.

To rejuvenate water resources, the good old 'kudimaramathu' scheme has been revived and in the current financial year alone, schemes worth Rs.100 crore will be implemented. In the coming year, the schemes will be implemented as a 'People's Movement' at a cost of Rs.300 crore.

In Tiruchi District alone, 1,328 works costing Rs.147.99 crore have been completed and are being inaugurated today. They include 3 drinking water schemes on behalf of Municipal Administration Department (Rs.51.38 crore) and 1,112 works on behalf of Rural Development Department (Rs.26.60 crore - 1,100 green houses, 10 Village Panchayat service centres and 2 bridges).

In Pudukkottai District 534 schemes costing Rs.132.74 crore are being inaugurated today. They include two 110 KV power sub-stations (Rs.42.19 crore) for the Electricity Board and 473 completed projects of the Rural Development Department (Rs.17.44 crore – a new bridge, Anganwadi buildings, Green Houses, Village Panchayat service centres and other buildings).

In Ariyalur District, 34 schemes costing Rs.7.32 crore are being inaugurated today. They include completed Anganwadi buildings, school buildings (Rs.1.06 crore) of the Rural Development Department and a students hostel (Rs. 1.07 crore) of the Adi Dravidar and ST Welfare Department.

Ninety-seven schemes costing Rs.46.79 crore are being inaugurated for Karur District today. They include a high rise bridge across Amaravathi river (Rs.13.75 crore) of the Highways Department, 45 project works (Rs.7.98 crore) of the Rural Development Department, comprising among other things, Anganwadi buildings and Village Panchayat Service Centres.

In Nagapattinam District, new schools and other school buildings of the School Education Department in Vedaranyam (Rs.12.12 crore) and 178 completed project works (Rs.61.12

crore) of the Highways Department including a work across Uppanar, Vellapallam (Rs.10.98 crore) are being inaugurated today.

In Perambalur District, 212 schemes (Rs.85.69 crore) including a new Dairy Farm (Rs.36.28 crore) and 5 new schools at various places (Rs.11.97 crore) are being inaugurated today.

In Thanjavur District 171 schemes (Rs.110.04 crore) are being inaugurated today. They include different buildings of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (Rs.27.20 crore) and 18 project works (Rs.19.50 crore) of the School Education Department such as 2 new schools and other school buildings at Orathanad and Kumbakonam.

In Tiruvarur District 49 completed schemes (Rs.31.87 crore) are being declared open today. They include an Arts and Science College at Nannilam, affiliated to the Bharathidasan University (Rs.7.25 crore) and water management works of the Public Works Department (Rs.4.36 crore).

Totally, 2,603 completed project works costing Rs.623.56 crore in the Districts of Ariyalur, Karur, Nagapattinam, Perambalur, Pudukkottai, Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Tiruchirappalli under Tiruchi Zone have been inaugurated today.

Hon'ble Amma protected the livelihood of farmers whenever natural disasters struck, by providing different welfare schemes and relief. As this is Amma's Government, we take greater interest in tenderly looking after farmers.

I assured the people and farmers of Neduvasal Village in Pudukkottai District not to entertain any fear over the proposed hydro carbon extraction in the village. I informed that the State Government has not issued mining lease licence for commercial production of petroleum products and it will not permit this project as farmers apprehend that their livelihood will be affected. I requested the Neduvasal Village representatives to give up the ongoing agitation at Neduvasal after assuring them that this Government, following the footsteps of Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, will not implement any scheme that affected the Tamil Nadu farmers.

This is people's Government. As a Government that acts swiftly in deference to the demands of the people, I once again assure you: 'We will not permit the implementation of any scheme that affects the livelihood of farmers'.

I could mention only a few of the schemes that have been taken up by Hon'ble Amma's Government in Tiruchi District. As Hon'ble Amma's rule continues, I assure you, many more schemes will follow.

I assure you that Ministers, Members of Legislature and Parliament and Government officials will work for you with love and determination.

I extend my greetings and thanks to all the good hearts who have made excellent arrangements for this function.

Nandri! Vanakkam!

Taking Amma's observations as commands, manifold schemes inaugurated in Salem Zone

Speech of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami on 07.03.2017, inaugurating Government Schemes for Salem Zone (*English Translation*)

I bow in reverence to Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma.

Hon'ble Ministers for Electricity Thiru. P.Thangamani, for Higher Education Thiru. K.P.Anbazhagan, for Social Welfare Dr. V.Saroja and for Animal Husbandry Thiru. P.Balakrishna Reddy who have graced this function,

Members of Parliament and Legislative Assembly,

High Officials of Government,

Officers of Police Department,

Newspaper and Media friends,

In the first place, I convey my regards to all of you.

I bow in the direction where Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma lives.

Hon'ble Amma's blessings has bestowed on this Government the rare opportunity of conducting in succession, inaugural functions for a series of schemes implemented in a short span of time.

In one of the public meetings, Hon'ble Amma said: 'The loyalty we showed to the people of Tamil Nadu won us the reward of their confidence, great support and their handing over the responsibility of Governance to us'.

In another meeting Hon'ble Amma said: ' I deem it my sacred duty to fulfill the promises I have made to those who voted for us, placing faith in me'. As per Hon'ble Amma's statement,

we take up this responsibility of governance as a sacred task and function accordingly; we will function so in future also.

Hon'ble Amma was keen, not only to complete speedily the schemes announced under Rule 110 but bring them to public utility immediately.

Giving priority to that Vedic dictum, we have divided Tamil Nadu into 5 Zones and are inaugurating the completed works in each of them and are laying foundation for those works to be commenced.

Hon'ble Amma mentioned: 'The Tamil Nadu Government, with the sole aim of people's welfare in mind, is taking different initiatives for the prosperity of the people and for safeguarding their interests by designing appropriate schemes for them. That is why, I signed, on the very first day of assuming office as Chief Minister, on files containing people beneficial schemes'.

I took this observation as a command and passed orders on five excellent schemes on the first day of assuming office at the Secretariat. People of Tamil Nadu know well the schemes I had cleared on the first day in office.

In the short period after Amma Government assumed office, as you know, it has carried out various people-oriented schemes.

On 04.03.2017, the inauguration and foundation laying for several new schemes, costing Rs.1,486.12 crore in the seven Districts under the Chennai zone, took place. In continuation of this, various project works are to be inaugurated in the Districts of Ariyalur, Karur, Nagapattinam, Perambalur, Pudukkottai, Thanjavur, Tiruchirappalli and Tiruvarur under the Tiruchi Zone. Most of these schemes are the ones announced by Hon'ble Amma under Rule 110.

Salem District has several specialities. The birth and growth of Dravidian movement, particularly centred around Salem.

Salem is like a garland of 'kadambam' for Tamil Nadu. It has a variety of trades – agriculture, small and micro industries, iron and textiles industries. The nearby Namakkal District has the maximum number of heavy vehicles. All strata of people with economic disparities reside here.

Hon'ble Amma has bestowed on me, one belonging to this Salem District, the unique opportunity of inaugurating these schemes for this District. Through this pleasant function, I convey my heartfelt gratitude to you all for electing me to the Legislative Assembly from this region.

In Salem District, 462 schemes costing Rs.115.71 crore have been inaugurated today. They include 13 schemes of the Municipal Administration Department (Rs.12.21 crore).

In Namakkal District, 1,479 schemes costing Rs.61.25 crore are being inaugurated today. They include 1,432 works of the Rural Development Department like Panchayat Offices, Anganwadi buildings, Green Houses and Panchayat Service Centres.

In Dharmapuri District, 113 projects costing Rs.60.33 crore are being opened today. They include a constituent college of Periyar University and a Government women's arts and science college at Karimangalam

(Rs.14.50 crore - Higher Education Department) and two model schools at Pennagaram, 3 new schools in Harur, buildings at Pappireddipatti for the scheme 'Education for All' and other buildings (Rs.19.19 crore – School Education Department).

In Krishnagiri District , 1,917 project works connected with the Departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development and Fisheries, Backward and Most Backward Classes, Co-operation, Food and Consumer Protection, Commercial Taxes and Registration, Electricity, Industries, Higher Education, Municipal Administration, School Education, Revenue, Highways and Rural Development and costing Rs.93.55 crore are being inaugurated today.

Totally, 3,971 schemes costing Rs.330.84 crore have been inaugurated in the Salem Zone comprising the Districts of Salem, Namakkal, Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri.

A Rs.803 crore mega scheme – Rainfed Agriculture Movement – a first in India has been announced for implementation in 4 years from the current year to enable farmers take up successfully rain-fed cultivation in Tamil Nadu. The State Government is taking up appropriate steps to develop 10 lakh hectares of rain fed lands through formation of 1,000 clusters, each comprising 1,000 hectares.

Due to monsoon failure, all Districts have been hit by drought. Farmers have been affected. This Government which follows Hon'ble Amma's path, has formulated instant schemes and is distributing reliefs speedily to protect the people from drought and to remove farmers' hardships.

This Government issued immediate orders for distribution of crop loss drought relief to farmers to the tune of Rs.2,247 crore. The distribution work started in Chennai on 06.03.2017. Orders to provide the relief

amount were distributed to farmers, one from each District. I have requested the Ministers to distribute the orders in the Districts. The relief amount will be credited immediately to the bank accounts of farmers. I wish to inform that 32,30,191 affected farmers will benefit from this.

The ceiling of 100 days work under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has been increased to 150 days for providing employment opportunities to agriculture labour, deprived of jobs on account of drought.

To obviate drinking water scarcity due to drought in rural areas, orders have been issued to upgrade water resources and drinking water distribution through the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat at a cost of Rs.350 crore and the works are in full swing.

To solve the drinking water scarcity in urban areas due to drought, works are afoot to upgrade the water resources and drinking water distribution at a cost of Rs. 160 crore. The work is carried out by the Department of Municipal Administration and Water Supply.

Orders have been issued to improve the water resources like conservation of ground water and ground water re-charging structures, through the Public Works Department at a cost of Rs.25 crore.

All these schemes are implemented by this Government as of poor people-centric.

As per Hon'ble Amma's advice that beneficiaries of Government welfare schemes should treat them as a stepping stone for their own further development, work hard and get all good things in life, I request the people to properly utilize the benefits of these schemes.

In Salem Municipal Corporation area, flyovers are being constructed at Thiruvakavundanur, A.V.R. Roundtana, Five Road, Kuranguchavadi and Manalmedu to reduce the traffic congestion in these places. In Sooramangalam area, a subway is being constructed. Steps have been taken to lay by-pass roads at Namakkal and Tiruchengode in Namakkal District. It is proposed to convert the Namakkal-Tiruchengode road into a four-lane traffic road and widen the

Paramathivelur-Tiruchengode road. Heavily congested roads in the Districts of Namakkal and Krishnagiri are proposed to be widened. In Salem District, new flyovers are to be constructed soon. To make the District a congestion-free District through these measures, Hon'ble Amma's Government has given hundreds of crores of rupees.

At a recent meeting with the Hon'ble Central Minister Nitin Gadkari at Delhi, a request was made for a ring road to Salem Corporation. He made the assurance that he would consider the request. I am happy to state that this Government will take up countless such road works.

This Government has inaugurated all these schemes with Hon'ble Amma's dictum: 'Our aim is high; our vision is clear; our victory is assured'.

My greetings to the beneficiaries of these schemes. My appreciation to all those who have given a concrete shape to these schemes. And my thanks to you who have enthused us to implement many more schemes by your participation in the function.

I convey my thanks to all those who have contributed for the success of this function.

NEWS IN PICTURE

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami** presented cheques on 03.03.2017 to a face value of Rs. 1.40 lakh and citations to 7 students of Chennai District who got the 2nd rank at the State Level in the 12th and 10th Public examinations in the academic year 2015-2016

Countless works rolled out for zone named after city that never sleeps

Speech of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami** on 08.03.2017 while inaugurating Government schemes for Madurai Zone (*English Translation*)

Bowing before Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma alias God,

Respected District Collector who is presiding over this excellent function,

Hon'ble Minister for Forests Thiru. Dindigul C.Sreenivasan, Hon'ble Minister for Co-operation Thiru. Sellur K.Raju, Hon'ble Minister for Revenue Thiru. R.B.Udhaya Kumar, Hon'ble Minister for Milk & Dairy Development Thiru.K.T. Rajenthra Bhalaji, Hon'ble Minister for Information Technology Dr. M.Manikandan, Hon'ble Minister for Khadi and Village Industries Thiru. G. Baskaran who are graciously participating in the function, Members of Parliament and Legislative Assembly, Government Secretaries, Police Department Officials, former Members of Parliament and Legislative Assembly, former Panchayat representatives, Administrators of Co-operative Societies, Newspaper and Media friends,

I offer my respects to all of you.

Madurai city is known as a city that never sleeps. This is because the people of Madurai city do business all through the night.

Fish don't sleep. Arulmigu Mother Meenakshi who has fish-like eyes is ever vigilant and protects the people of Madurai without going to sleep. This is another interpretation. Hon'ble Amma who was the anchor of All

India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam appeared to us as the "Maha Sakthi" who toiled tirelessly without a wink to protect the people of Tamil Nadu.

Like Delhi in the North, Madurai City in the South was ruled by many dynasties. Particularly the Pandyas, Cholas and Nayaks ruled this city at different times. Those dynasties left their imprint in art, civilization, architecture, language and culture. That is why Madurai still remains a confluence of arts.

Another grandeur of Madurai is that it has established that a woman can get justice against an all- powerful king. The world knows that in the same way, Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, fought and fought single-handedly for the people of Tamil Nadu and won several victories for them. The womenfolk of Tamil Nadu are able to get all kinds of rights and opportunities, progress fast and become achievers in several fields today. I am very happy to narrate this today, the World Women's Day.

It is said that only a woman knows the difficulties of another woman. From the day of taking over the reins of administration of Tamil Nadu, Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, became the lode star for women and removed their woes by implementing in succession different welfare schemes for them. That, two of the five special schemes signed on the very first day of assuming office by this Amma Government pertain to women, will show that this Government is Amma's Government.

Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma was of the view that women were the eyes of a country. In one of the meetings, she declared: "Women, if they so willed, can alter not only their own destiny but also that of others; they need opportunities. Providing those opportunities to them is my goal". No other Nation or State has given so many welfare schemes for women as the Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma's Government has done. I extend my greetings to all women on World Women's Day with the promise that this Amma Government which is

following the footsteps of Amma, is ready to offer numerous welfare schemes to women.

Madurai city fostered Tamil by establishing a Sangam. This soil developed Tamil with devotional literary works. That is why, Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R, with a visionary outlook, ordered the setting up of the World Tamil Sangam in Madurai. Hon'ble Amma revived this scheme, allotted funds and raised a huge building for the Sangam and recorded an achievement.

We consider the holding of this function in this World Tamil Sangam complex as a historic event. Puratchi Thalaivar MGR announced at the Fifth World Tamil Conference the setting up of a World Tamil Sangam Complex. Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma declared open this building, constructed at a cost of Rs.37.25 crore on 14.5 acres of land, on 01.03.2016. After that event, I wish to remind you, this is the major Government function that is taking place in this building. I am extremely happy to inaugurate the many schemes that were launched by Hon'ble Amma and completed later.

In Madurai District, 1,641 works, costing Rs.91.51 crore, have been inaugurated. They include 276 Slum Clearance Board apartments in Puratchi Thalaivar Colony scheme area (Rs.20.35 crore) and a multi-purpose indoor stadium (Rs.1.50 crore).

In Theni District, 333 works costing Rs.84.43 crore have been inaugurated today. They include a drinking water scheme and a 110 KV power sub-station in Periyakulam (Rs.15.53 crore).

In Dindigul District, 1,644 works costing Rs.103.93 crore have been inaugurated today. They include a new office building in Dindigul Municipal Corporation (Rs.5 crore), a new bus stand in Natham Town Panchayat (Rs.4.90 crore) and the Dindigul (East) Taluk office building (Rs.2.02 crore).

In Sivagangai District, 548 works costing Rs.45.01 crore have been inaugurated including

the installation of an MRI Scan equipment for the Sivagangai Government Medical College Hospital (Rs.7 crore) and women's hostel buildings and additional class rooms in Karaikudi Alagappa University (Rs.3.52 crore).

In Ramanathapuram District, 1,398 works costing Rs.600.18 crore have been inaugurated today. They include the setting up of fish landing centres at Pamban, Mukundarayar Chatram and at Vedaalai (Rs.22.90 crore) and girls' hostels at Paramakudi and Neeravi (Rs.3.05 crore).

In Virudhunagar District, 1,310 works, costing Rs.79.07 crore have been inaugurated today. They include construction of buildings for arts and science constituent colleges of Madurai Kamarajar University at Aruppukottai and Sathur (Rs.14.50 crore), construction of check dams at Achankulam and Kottaipatti (Rs.11.06 crore) and buildings for the Virudhunagar District Headquarters Hospital (Rs.33 crore).

Totally, 6,874 schemes completed at a cost of Rs.1,004.13 crore in the Districts of Madurai, Theni, Dindigul, Sivagangai, Ramanathapuram and Virudhunagar under Madurai Zone are being inaugurated here today.

Fishing is the premier industry in Rameswaram in Ramanathapuram District. Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma took great interest in the welfare and protection of fishermen and implemented several welfare schemes for them.

While the previous DMK Government had allotted Rs.193.33 crore for fisheries development in 2010-2011, Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma raised it and allotted Rs.743.79 crore in 2016-2017. By this manifold rise of allotment, she ushered in prosperity in the lives of fishermen.

In the last 5 years, Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma's Government completed the upgradation of State's fisheries infrastructure on an unprecedented outlay of Rs.1,104.91 crore.

Under the scheme of 50 per cent subsidy, subject to a maximum of Rs.30 lakh, for building new mechanized fishing boats suitable for deep tuna long liner cum crill netter fishing, 11 beneficiary teams have been allotted Rs.3.30 crore and boat building work is afoot. By way of special relief during the lean season for fishing, Rs.22.62 crore were disbursed to 4,524 fishermen families in 2016-2017.

Hon'ble Amma laid the foundation for a Rs.114 crore fishing harbour at Mookaiyur, Ramanathapuram District and works are being carried out.

In establishing the traditional fishing rights of Tamil Nadu fishermen in the Palk Bay and in retrieving Katchatheevu, ceded during the DMK regime, Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma took a firm stand. By way of reiterating that stand, the present Amma Government submitted a petition to the Hon'ble Prime Minister in person on 27.02.2017.

While things are so, I was extremely pained to hear the news that Thiru. Britjo, a fisherman from Rameswaram died when the Sri Lankan Navy opened fire on fishermen fishing in Palk Bay on March 6, 2017. I directed an immediate financial assistance of Rs.5 lakh to the family of the deceased and ordered the District Administration to provide consistent treatment to the one injured in the firing. I have written to the Hon'ble Prime Minister stressing the immediate cessation of Sri Lankan Navy's atrocities. The Central Government too has sought an explanation from the Sri Lankan Government.

I firmly declare that this Government too will be supportive of fishermen as had been the Governments of Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivar MGR and Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma.

The severe drought caused by monsoon failure has greatly affected the farmers. This Government, following the path of Hon'ble Amma, has immediately ordered distribution of Rs.2,247 crore as crop loss drought relief to farmers. The distribution of relief started at Chennai on 06.03.2017. Hon'ble Ministers are to disburse the orders to farmers for the grant of relief in each District. The relief amount will be credited to the bank accounts of farmers. This will benefit 32,30,191 farmers who have been affected by the drought.

Dry fodder godowns are being opened at Taluk level in all Districts including Delta Districts to fight cattle fodder scarcity on account of the severe drought.

Steps are also being taken to face the drought by efficient management of water resources in the State.

To restore water resources, the age-old 'kudimaramathu' scheme is revived and in the current financial year alone works will be undertaken to the tune of Rs.100 crore.

To provide employment opportunity to agriculture labour, deprived of job on account of drought, the ceiling under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has been increased from 100 to 150 days.

Orders have been issued to upgrade the water resources and drinking water distribution system at a cost of Rs.350 crore through the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat for solving the drinking water shortage in rural areas on account of drought.

As for urban areas, similar works will be undertaken by the Department of Municipal Administration and Water Supply at a cost of Rs.160 crore.

The Public Works Department has been ordered to improve the structures for conservation of ground water and for

re-charging them at a cost of Rs.25 crore and works are being carried out speedily.

I assure that this Amma Government will ever be loyal to Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma by treading her path and by fulfilling all her desires. To explain what loyalty means, a short story.

'Several birds were living happily with their families on a huge tree in a forest. They loved the tree. However, God wanted to test whether they really loved the tree. He created an illusion and turned it into a withered tree. One of the parrots that lived on the tree was stunned at the seeming state of the tree. It shed tears and recalled how the tree had sheltered it, fed it and gave flowers to adorn itself. While all other birds fled to greener locations, this parrot stayed put and continued to live in the same place'.

'Seeing the determination of the parrot, God appeared before it and asked what made it stay back without seeking a greener pasture. The parrot replied: I was born on this tree; later, this tree itself became my mother and fed me; it was like a close friend and protected me from Nature's fury; an unfavourable situation might have overtaken it now. But it is not right to leave the tree which is like my mother'.

'I am greatly indebted to this tree which had showered affection on me. So, kindly don't ask me to leave this tree'. God was extremely happy on hearing these words of the parrot. God felt that this parrot which wanted to remain loyal to the tree that fostered it without caring for its own self, was a unique one; and deserved to be worshipped'.

"Alright; You need not leave this tree; you ask any other boon" God said. "Restore the tree to its old condition with all green leaves", the parrot said. God told the parrot: 'This tree has not really undergone any change; I created an illusion to know the mind of the birds that lived here. I am wonder struck at the loyalty you, a parrot, have shown to this tree. I shall make this tree bloom once again".

A small parrot showed great affection to the tree which fostered it; argued for the tree with God and made that tree bloom once again. But some human beings, for their own selfish reasons, are going in different directions, forgetting the path by which they came. But one thing is certain; if one is loyal selflessly, God will elevate us. To be thankful, to remain loyal will bring God to us. We should not forget this.

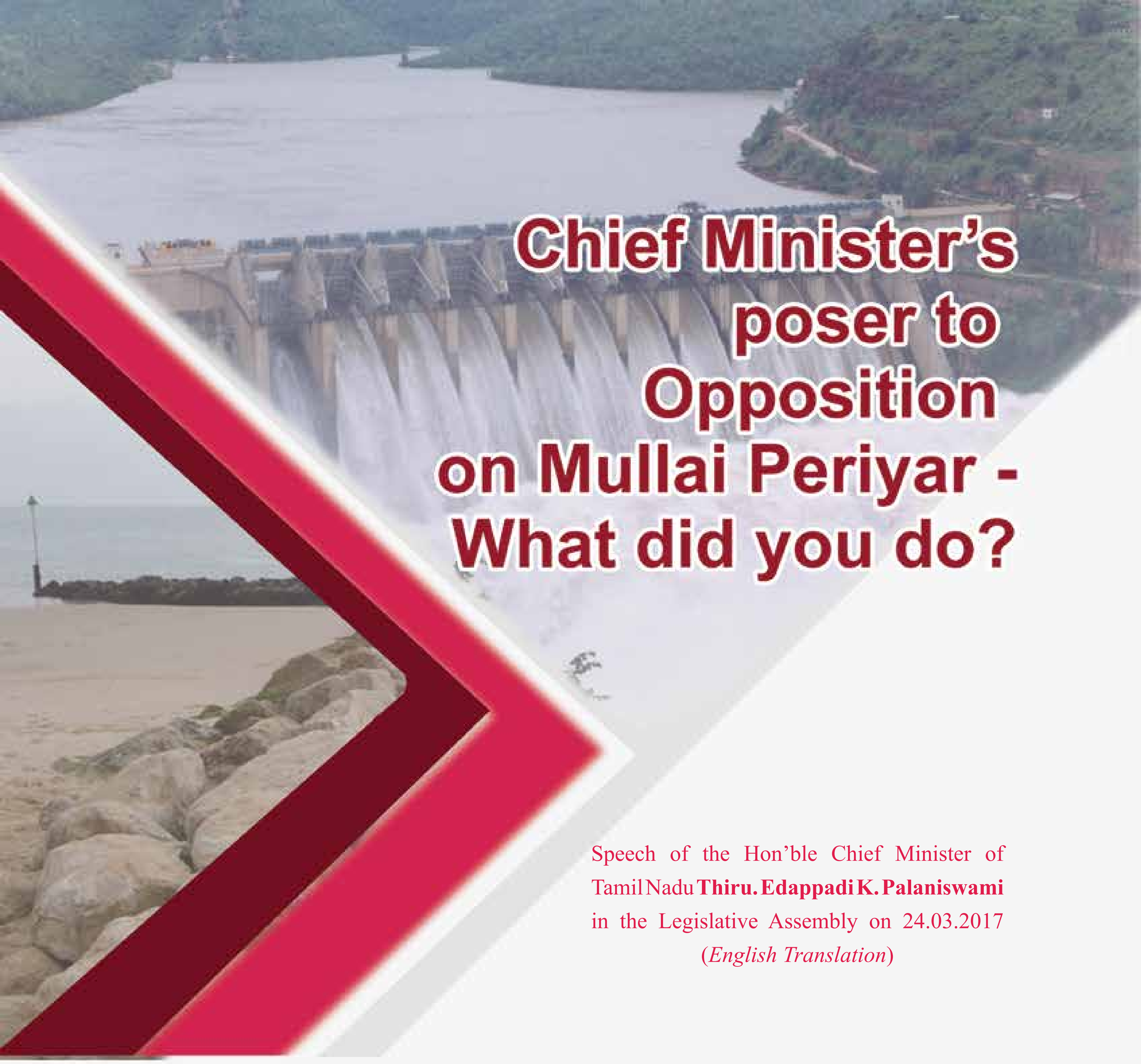
Hon'ble Amma would often say: 'my thoughts, my actions are all people centric'. 'The poor should not remain poor; their status should rise. I toil day and night only for that'. Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma enthused her followers also to work for the people.

We pledge at this function that we will carry out all the people related works left behind by Hon'ble Amma and remain loyal to her.

Your participation in this pleasant function gives us happiness and incentivises us to implement more schemes. Our thanks to you.

I thank all the people who have made arrangements for this excellent function .

Nandri! Vanakkam!



Chief Minister's poser to Opposition on Mullai Periyar - What did you do?

Speech of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami** in the Legislative Assembly on 24.03.2017 (*English Translation*)

Hon'ble Speaker,

Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition spoke here about the steps taken by this Government in the Mullai Periyar issue.

During Amma's rule, only after Amma's Government waged a legal battle, the water storing level in the Mullai Periyar dam was raised from 136 ft. to 142 ft. To raise the water storage level further from 142 ft. to 152 ft., Amma's Government is taking all steps as had been chalked out by Amma. For strengthening and repairing the dam, Rs.7.85 crore was allotted. The Kerala Government is not extending full co-operation to that work. I wish to point out that the delay

is only due to this factor; the work continues in full swing.

You have also talked about the Cauvery Management Board. In May 2007, the Tribunal gave its final order. Then, you were in power at the Centre. Had you implemented it even then, the issue would not have cropped up now. You did not issue the final order in the Central Government gazette; nor did you take up any steps for that.

However, Amma's Government was constantly writing to the Prime Minister, insisting on the publication of the final order of the Tribunal in the Government gazette. Since those demands were also ignored, the Supreme Court was approached, a solution was found and the order was gazetted. It was Puratchi Thalaivi Amma who did it. It was Hon'ble Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma who got us back our share of water and our rights. Likewise, the Supreme Court is now hearing a case for the setting up of the Cauvery Management Board. The case has been adjourned. Through you, I wish to inform the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition that we are expecting a favourable verdict from the Supreme Court.

You were in the Central Government then. In 2007 itself, the Tribunal gave its final award. You could have published the verdict speedily in the gazette and could have set up the management board. For 3 years, from 2007 to 2010, you were in the Central Government. What did you do? That is my question. You are responsible for the damage caused to agriculture today. No one else is. In February 2007, the Tribunal gave its final verdict. At that time, you were in power at the Centre . If the order had been gazette then itself and the Cauvery Management Board was set up, farmers would not have been pushed to the Present State.

Hon'ble Deputy Speaker,

Hon'ble Member has made a request that a groyne be put up in his Killiyur Assembly constituency to prevent sea erosion. I wish to point out that Government is considering the setting up of a groyne at the Killiyur-Vilavankode-Thoothur area at a cost of Rs.166 lakh, at Vilavancode-Chinnathur at a cost of Rs.198 lakh, Vilvancode-Eraviputthanthurai at a cost of Rs.309 lakh, at Vilavancode-Vallavilaithurai at a cost of Rs.456 lakh, at Agastheesvaram-Melamanakkudi at a cost of Rs.154 lakh, at Vilavancode-Mullurthurai at a cost of Rs.136.50 lakh, at Vilavancode-Karayanthope – Thengaipattinam at a cost of Rs.129 lakh and at Agastheesvaram-Vallamthurai at a cost of Rs.159 lakh.

He has also pointed out that the salinity of ground water is increasing due to sea water ingress into the town. He has also demanded the setting up of a groyne there. I wish to bring it to his notice that Government has given approval for the construction of a groyne at Mangadu's lower terrain at a cost of Rs.18 crore.

Hon'ble Speaker,

I wish to give the details of the announcements made under Rule 110:

In 2011-2012, the total number of announcements made is 51; implemented 43; under implementation – 8.

In 2012-2013, total announcements - 87, implemented - 62; under implementation - 22; under preparatory works - 1; in Courts after the issue of Government Order - 2 works.

In 2013-2014, total announcements - 292; implemented - 214; under implementation - 75; under preparatory works – 2; in Court – 1.

In 2014 – 2015, total announcements - 236; implemented - 126; under implementation -105; under preparatory works – 1; under central Government's scrutiny – 2; in Courts – 2 schemes.

In 2015 -2016, total announcements made - 213; implemented - 82; under implementation-122; under preparatory works - 3; under Central Government's scrutiny 4; in Courts after the issue of GO – 2.

Totally, 879 announcements were made from 2011-2012 to 2015-2016, 527 were implemented, 332 schemes were under implementation, 7 works under preparatory works, 6 under Central Government's scrutiny and 7 pending in courts after Government Orders were issued for them.

Likewise, I wish to inform the Leader of the Opposition through you, that in 2016-2017, 175 announcements were made under Rule 110, 10 were implemented, 133 are under implementation, 7 are under preparatory works and 2 are under Central Government's examination.

■

NEWS IN PICTURE

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami** presided over a review meeting at the Secretariat on 28.03.2017 on drought relief works and drinking water schemes. Hon'ble Minister for Municipal Administration, Rural Development and Special Programme Implementation Thiru.S.P.Velumani, Hon'ble Minister for Industries Thiru.M.C.Sampath, Hon'ble Minister for Revenue Thiru. R.B.Udhaya Kumar, Chief Secretary to Government Dr. Girija Vaidyanathan I.A.S. and other high Government officials participated.

Giving a helping hand to the differently-abled

One of the important duties of a State Government is to help and provide good life to the differently-abled persons. Realizing this, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma's Government has started treating them as a limb of society and is taking vigorous steps to involve them in society's development by creating equal opportunities for them.

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami inaugurated at the Secretariat on 06.03.2017 the State Government's current year distribution at no cost of retrofitted petrol scooters costing Rs.6.30 crore to 1,083 differently-abled persons, by presenting the scooters to two beneficiaries.

Also, a special scheme of distributing at no cost Rs.25,000/- worth Tabs with computer software to cerebral palsy affected children and mentally retarded children to help them communicate with others (Augmentative and Alternative Communication System – AAC) has been introduced from this year. The allocation for this scheme in the current year is Rs.49.25 lakh.

In the first phase, it is proposed to supply two AACs each to special schools in the State. The scheme aims to benefit 197 differently-abled children in the primary training centres run with the help of the Department for the differently-abled and children benefiting through the mobile treatment units, functioning

in all Districts. By way of inaugurating this scheme, the Hon'ble Chief Minister distributed this special equipment.

The Chief Minister distributed Rs.3 lakh assistance from the Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund to a differently-abled student from Perambur, R. Rajaram to enable him take up chartered accountant course, taking into account the marks he had scored in the 10th and 12th public examinations and his poor economic condition.

In one of the announcements, Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma made in the Legislative Assembly under Rule 110, she said specially designed wheel chairs, costing Rs.20,000/- each, would be given to the differently-abled persons affected with spinal cord and neurological deficiencies. By way of inaugurating the scheme for the distribution of these wheel chairs to 960 persons (Rs. 1.92 crore) at the rate of 30 numbers for each District, the Chief Minister presented the special wheel chairs to two differently-abled persons.

The Chief Minister also launched the scheme for distribution of Audio Alert System to the visually impaired for alerting them while waiting in a bus stop, about the arrival of a Government bus to their destination, by presenting the instrument to a visually impaired differently-abled person. In Chennai, the scheme is to be implemented in 75 Government buses on 10 routes, most frequented by visually handicapped persons. In the first phase Radio Frequency Transmitter (RFT) will be fitted in 75 select buses at a cost of Rs.3,65,625/-. Radio Frequency Receivers are to be distributed to 150 visually impaired persons at a cost of Rs.5.85 lakh.

NEWS IN PICTURE

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru.Edappadi K.Palaniswami** inaugurated the drinking water supply development scheme costing Rs. 1.90 crore in the Edappadi Municipality in Salem District, on 18.03.2017.

PM apprised of 'pathetic plight' of 35 fishermen detained in Iran

D.O. letter dated 22.03.2017addressed by **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

"I wish to bring to your kind notice the pathetic plight of **thirty five Indian fishermen** who were arrested and detained by the Iranian Coast Guard in three separate incidents. The fishermen were engaged in fishing in Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on contract basis under the sponsorship of local employers.

In the first incident, 5 fishermen from Kanniyakumari District of Tamil Nadu ventured for fishing in a fishing boat 'Dhanak Tharin' owned by a local sponsor from Saudi Arabia on 05.08.2016. During the course of fishing operations, they inadvertently strayed into Iranian waters and were apprehended and thereafter detained in Pachar Jail in Iran by the Iranian Coast Guard since 07.08.2016.

In the second incident of apprehension, fifteen (15) fishermen from Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli and Ramanathapuram Districts of Tamil Nadu ventured for fishing in 3 mechanized fishing boats owned by three

local sponsors from Muharakkh base of Bahrain on 20th September, 2016. During the course of fishing operations, they inadvertently strayed into Iranian waters and were apprehended and thereafter detained in Kish Island in Iran by the Iranian Coast Guard since 22.09.2016. It is reported that the Iranian Court imposed a fine which has also been paid by the fishermen through their local sponsors. However, even after remittance of the fine, the Indian fishermen are yet to be released by the Iranian Authorities.

In the third incident, fifteen (15) fishermen from Ramanathapuram District of Tamil Nadu ventured for fishing in fishing boats owned by local sponsors from Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. During the course of fishing operations, they inadvertently strayed into Iranian waters and were apprehended and thereafter detained in Kish Island in Iran by the Iranian Coast Guard since 27.12.2016.

I bring this matter to your notice seeking your immediate and personal intervention to instruct the Embassies of India in Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and in Iran to take effective legal steps to secure the immediate release of these poor innocent Indian fishermen. The prolonged incarceration of these poor fishermen who went abroad to earn their livelihood severely affects their families and dependents in India who are suffering economically and also undergoing mental trauma. I request you to kindly instruct the Ministry of External Affairs to take speedy action in this matter".

Rs. 20 lakh solatium for family of killed CRPF constable

Statement of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami** on 12.03.2017 (English Translation).

I was extremely sad and distressed on hearing the news that Thiru. K. Shankar, a Central Reserve Police Constable and son of Thiru. Kadhirvel of Kazhumaram Village, Tirukoilur Taluk, Villupuram District, Tamil Nadu, died on 11.03.2017 in the Naxal attack at Sukma District, Chattisgarh State while engaged in defence operations.

I convey my deep sense of condolence and sympathy to the bereaved family. I have directed officials to grant immediately Rs.20 lakh to the family of Thiru. K. Shankar.

Government to ensure safety of students who go to other States for higher studies

Speech of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami** in the Legislative Assembly on a special call attention notice over the death of student Thiru. Muthukrishnan of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Hon'ble Speaker,

Not a great event to be born as a human; the birth should turn out to be a great birth/ Nothing big to grow up; it is to be a growth with wisdom/ Not a great thing to become an achiever; the achievements should be historic.

In that way, if there is one who is a historic achiever from birth, it is world renowned Hon'ble Amma.

Hon'ble Speaker,

Idaya Deivam Puratchi Thalaivi Amma remained the custodian of (Tamil) race, (Tamil) language, riverine rights, social justice, the poor, the marginalized and women's glory. She left historic imprints everywhere and was Idaya Deivam to eight and a half crore Tamils living in all corners of the world. She became the solid root that supported the banyan tree of AIADMK and became the chief offspring of Tamil race and led a life of penance as Chief Minister with the mantra 'I am by the people; I am for the people'. Today she stands on the shoreline of Bay of Bengal as God and is directing us. My obeisance to Her.

Hon'ble Speaker,

I also pay my respects to Hon'ble Chinnamma, General Secretary of AIADMK who has created this good opportunity for me.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

On hearing the news that Thiru. Muthukrishnan, son of Thiru. Jeevanandam of Arisipalayam, Salem District, an M.Phil. research student of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi died on 13.03.2017, I was sad and offered my deep sense of condolence and sympathy to his family.

A case has been registered in the Vasantha Vihar Police Station, New Delhi in connection with the death of Muthukrishnan – crime no.120/2017 – under sec. 306 of IPC and under sec.3(1)(X) of the SC/ST Atrocities (Prevention) Act. Post mortem was conducted by a team of 5 doctors and the body was handed over to Thiru. Jeevanandam, father of the deceased.

On my orders, the Tamil Nadu Government provided all assistance to bring Muthukrishnan's

body to his native place. Considering the late Muthukrishnan's family condition, I ordered that Rs. 3 lakh be given to the family from the Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund.

Thiru. Panneerselvam, MP and the Salem District Collector paid their last respects to the body of Muthukrishnan and handed over to his parents a cheque for the relief amount of Rs.3 lakh.

The case related to the death of Muthukrishnan is being investigated by the Vasantha Vihar Police Station, New Delhi.

I wish to inform that the Hon'ble Minister of State for Road Transport Thiru. Pon. Radhakrishnan went to Salem and paid his respects to the body of Muthukrishnan at his house.

The Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition expressed the view that safety of students who have gone to other States for higher studies should be ensured. Through you, I wish to inform the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition that this Government would make necessary safety arrangements for students in other States for their higher studies.

Concrete houses for the poor

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami issued work orders at the Secretariat on 09.03.2017 for 5 beneficiaries as a mark of inaugurating for the year 2016-2017, the scheme of building concrete houses for the economically weaker sections in Town Panchayat areas with State and Central Government assistance.

For 2016-2017, the proposal is to construct houses to 50,170 beneficiaries in 329 Town Panchayat areas at a total cost of Rs.1,580.36 crore (each house costing Rs. 3.15 lakh).

Lake works to be completed soon at Kottayam village

Speech of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of the Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami** on 24.03.2017 in the Legislative Assembly on setting up a lake across Nallathangal rivulet at Kottayam village, Oddanchatram Taluk, Dindigul District.

Hon'ble Speaker,

The Tamil Nadu Government sanctioned Rs.6.97 crore for setting up a lake across Nallathangal rivulet at Kottayam village, Oddanchatram Taluk, Dindigul District. The project is designed to provide irrigation facilities to 804 acres in the villages of Kottayam and Poduvarpatti for production of 576 tonnes of foodgrains.

For this project, a total of 131.50 acres of patta lands – 82.78 acres in Kottayam village and 48.72 acres in Poduvarpatti village – have to be acquired besides 20 acres of poramboke lands. On 30.01.2015, the Government issued orders giving administrative sanction for a revised estimate of Rs.11.12 crore for this project.

Acquisition of 82.78 acres of patta land in Kottayam village is about to be completed now. As for the 48.72 acres land in Poduvarpatti village, land owners demanded a higher compensation while fixing the land price and a revised land value was arrived at after direct negotiations. Steps have been taken to acquire these lands.

When the lake setting up work was half way through, the contract for the project was brought to a close as land acquisition had not been completed fully.

Till date, expenditure incurred on this project was Rs. 9.86 crore - Rs.5.25 crore towards land acquisition and Rs.4.61 crore toward execution of works.

Now, as the land acquisition is about to be completed, I wish to inform that the project works will be completed soon after sanctioning the revised estimate for the project.

State machinery geared to fight severe drought on war footing

Statement of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu **Thiru. Edappadi K.Palaniswami** on 21.02.2017 (*English Translation*)

In taking immediate precautionary measures to protect people from natural disasters like floods, cyclone and drought, the Tamil Nadu Government is following the path of Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma.

2. In the last 140 years, Tamil Nadu has not received such a low rainfall in the North-East Monsoon as in the current year. Against an average rainfall of 440 mm, in the monsoon period of October 1 to December 31, the rainfall in the current year is just 168.03 mm. The Tamil Nadu Government has taken up all steps to manage this severe drought on a war footing.

3. Guidelines were framed for crop inspection throughout the State and District Collectors were directed to undertake inspection as per those guidelines. District-wise teams with Hon'ble Ministers and senior IAS Officers were formed and they have submitted their recommendations to Government after field inspection.

4. The field inspection has revealed that of the 16,682 revenue villages, 13,305 villages have been affected by drought; crop inspection in 1,564 of these villages has revealed that 87 per cent of lands have been affected by drought.

5. Government orders have been issued regarding drought and relief works on the basis of the reports of District- level teams and the action taken on them is as follows:

a) All Districts have been declared as drought affected.

b) Orders have been issued to waive in full, land tax to be paid by farmers for the 1,426 fasli year in all Districts and follow up action is being taken;

c) Annavari certificates are being issued to convert farmers' crop loans with the

co-operative and Commercial Banks into medium-term loans.

d) Orders have been issued for joint enumeration by the Revenue and Agricultural Departments for distribution of due relief assistance to farmers who have sustained more than 33 per cent of yield loss; the enumeration work has been completed.

e) Rs. 6.91 crore has been released for distribution of green and dry fodders and concentrates through the Departments of Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development and Fisheries to fight fodder scarcity for livestock due to drought.

f) Orders have been issued to take up works costing Rs.5 crore for augmenting needed food and drinking water resources through the Forest Department for protecting wildlife from drought. Follow-up action is being taken.

g) The ceiling of 100 days work under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has been increased to 150 days to provide employment to agricultural labour affected by lack of work due to drought.

h) Orders have been issued to implement upgradation works in respect of water resources and in drinking water distribution structure costing Rs.350 crore, through the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat, for solving drinking water scarcity in rural areas on account of drought; the works are being carried out speedily.

i) To solve the drinking water shortage in urban areas, orders have been issued to take up similar works at a cost of Rs.160 crore through the Department of Municipal Administration and Water Supply and they are being executed speedily.

j) Orders have been issued to take up works costing Rs.25 crore through the Department of Public Works for the upgradation of water resources like ground-water retention and re-charging structures and they are implemented speedily.

k) Though the suicide of 17 farmers in the last 2 months has been due to various causes, Rs.3 lakh relief assistance has been given from the Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund to each of their families on humanitarian grounds, in consideration of the poverty-stricken condition of the deceased.

l) As the new crop insurance scheme will benefit the farmers more, the Government has allotted Rs.410 crore through the Department of Agriculture in the current year as its share of the premium for crop insurance; so far 14.99 lakh farmers have registered in this scheme; crops in 30.102 lakh acres have been insured.

m) Orders have been issued to undertake crop cutting experiments to enable farmers who have insured their crops to claim compensation from the insurance company for their crop loss; so far 44,489 experiments have been undertaken in different crops; on the basis of the yield

data obtained from these experiments, the insurance companies concerned will shortly pay the compensation.

6. As the whole of Tamil Nadu is drought-hit, the Central Government has been requested to provide an assistance of Rs.39,565 crore from the Central Disaster Relief Fund. To assess the drought condition, a 9-member team visited and inspected the drought-affected Districts from 23.01.2017 to 25.01.2017.

7. As per the enumeration, jointly undertaken by the Departments of Revenue and Agriculture for providing relief assistance to farmers, crops in 50,34,237 acres belonging to 32,30,191 farmers have been affected. A relief assistance of Rs.2,247 crore for inputs has to be provided. The break-up is Rs.2,049 crore to 28.99,877 farmers who have raised agri-crops in 46,27,142 acres, Rs.197 crore to 3,27,398 farmers who have cultivated plantation crops in 4,04,326 acres and Rs.1 crore to 2,916 farmers who have raised mulberry for sericulture in 3,658 acres.

8. In these circumstances, at a review meeting held on 21.02.2017, under my leadership, I ordered the immediate release of Rs.2,247 crore as input relief assistance to 32,30,191 farmers. Accordingly, an assistance of Rs.5,465/- per acre will be provided for paddy and other irrigated crops, assessed as affected under the State Disaster Relief Guidelines, Rs.3,000/- per acre for rain-fed crops, Rs.7,287/- per acre for long-term crops and Rs.2,428/- to Rs.3,000/- per acre for affected mulberry crop.

9. As a result of this action of the Government, 14.99 lakh farmers who have insured their crops, can get, besides the above relief, Rs.4,800/- to Rs.69,000/- per acre as insurance dividend, depending on the type of crop raised, the District of cultivation and the extent of crop loss. I have advised the insurance companies to release the dividend amount progressively with the completion of the crop cutting experiments.

10. I have directed the District Collectors to undertake surveys continuously at the village level for ensuring distribution of drinking water to people and provision of adequate job opportunities to farm labour under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and to take immediate action on them.

11. I have directed the Government Officials to be vigilant on the drought situation in the state and take all necessary relief measures.

Jumbo rehab centre at Paramareddypalayam

Hon'ble Minister for Forest s Thiru. Dindigul C. Sreenivasan told the Legislative Assembly on 22.03.2017 that there was no possibility of locating an elephant sanctuary at Sanamangalam Panchayat Union in Manachanallur Assembly Constituency, Tiruchirappalli District as traditionally elephants were not seen frequenting any forest area in that District.

However, the Hon'ble Minister said, replying to a question from Tmt. M. Parameswari, Member from Manachanallur, a rehabilitation centre had been set up at the Paramareddypalayam reserve forest near Sanamangalam Panchayat Union in Manachanallur Constituency.

Elephants do not confine themselves to particular limited areas but like to occupy vast forest stretches. The migratory path of elephants and elephant corridor change according to the availability of habitation facilities for all elephants, environment and availability of suitable vegetation for food.

Hence, the Central Government, the Hon'ble Minister said, would permit location of an elephant sanctuary only in the areas of their traditional habitat and long time corridors. However, the Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre on a 19.80 hectare area in the Paramareddypalayam reserve forest was serving excellently for the upkeep of the health of private and temple elephants around Tiruchirappalli District and for preserving their inherent qualities. This centre had lodging, nutritious food, bathing and medical facilities for elephants and lodging facilities for the mahouts. Also, for the development of the centre, Rs.37.40 lakh had been allotted in the current year also, he said.